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MATTHEW BRENT



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JUST THINK OF IT

SUPPOSE you had been removed from the business world fifty years ago;—

Suppose from that time until the present you had been kept in total ignorance of its financial development, its growing lust for power, its ever expanding greed and its wonderful progress in mechanical invention:—

Suppose you were then brought back and in some unexpected manner forced to administer the affairs of the Standard Oil Company, or some great newspaper, or industrial plant:—

What do you think would be the immediate result to yourself and others, especially if there was no one in whom you had confidence, to whom you could turn for information, or advice?

That is the situation which Matthew Brent was forced to confront; and this is the story of what he did and what happened, because he had not considered both sides of a most vital subject.

While it is undoubtedly true that great wealth may become a great evil, it is equally true that wealth carries with it opportunities and responsibilities toward mankind, which cannot be evaded.



MATTHEW BRENT

CHAPTER I

SIMON Brent sat alone in his private office intently studying the three-column picture of a girl's face on

the front page of his morning paper.

This might not have been considered an unusual occupation for the ordinary man, as girls' pictures have always been an attraction, and the picture at which Simon Brent gazed was that of an unusually pretty girl.

But Simon Brent was not an ordinary man.

At that moment—the early spring of 19—, —and for some years previous—Simon Brent had been the dominant figure in the world of finance. He was the managing director and owned the controlling interest in a score or more of the most gigantic industrial, transportation and financial corporations. No man of the day was more generally in the public mind.

It is not surprising, therefore, that he was at once the most greatly envied, the most cordially hated, the most assiduously courted, the most bitterly excoriated, the most loudly praised and the most ardently admired man in America. He was everything good to his friends and admirers. He was everything bad to his critics and

enemies.

Friend and foe alike, however, were forced to admit that it was his grasping nature and almost total disregard for the rights of others that had made him the undisputed money king of the land.

If any of the millions of persons upon whose lips the

name of Simon Brent was so familiar could have seen him at this moment, they would have wondered what there was in the picture to attract a man of his age—for Simon was past eighty, while the picture was that of a girl not more than eighteen.

"I wonder!" he muttered to himself, "I wonder!"

He held the paper closer to the light and studied it carefully. Then he read the caption above the picture.

"Mary Brent!" he ejaculated. "Mary! That was her grandmother's name, if she is really whom she pretends to be."

He arose slowly from his chair and approached a small case filled with books. Opening the case, he had just laid his hand upon one of the volumes when a dapper office boy entered.

"A personal letter for you, sir," and he held out the

missive.

"What's that?" asked Simon in a thin querulous voice.

"A personal letter for you."

"A begging letter, you mean! I don't get any personal letters. Give it to Morris."

"Prichard says this is personal, sure enough," insisted the boy. "He says it's from your brother."

"My brother!" gasped Simon as he reached out his

hand. "Did Prichard say that?"

Then as he took the letter from the boy's hand and held it toward the light: "Why didn't Prichard bring it himself?"

"He didn't look like he could, sir. He looks shakier

than you."

Simon turned his eyes from the letter and frowned down upon the boy over the rim of his spectacles—for in spite of his eighty years, Simon was still erect, although almost as thin as a shingle.

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"Tell Prichard to come here!" he snapped.

The boy hastily left the room and Simon returned to his seat at the desk. With trembling fingers he unfolded the letter and held it up to the light, intently examining the signature.

"Yes," he muttered, "it's Matthew's signature all right. It's been close to fifty years since I've heard from him, but the signature is the same. I wonder what he is writ-

ing about?"

Then the picture again caught his eye.

"That's it!" he mused aloud. "It's about the girl! It's about the girl!"

"What's that about the girl?" queried a voice at his elbow, whose tones were almost as agitated as his own.

"Oh, it's you, is it, Prichard?" exclaimed Simon looking up at the man who had silently entered the office and whose manner, appearance and gestures proclaimed him the old confidential clerk. "You recognized the signature, too, did you?"

"Yes, sir, although it's been many years since I saw it."

"It must be about the girl," said Simon. "You've been reading the papers, I suppose?" the last words in a peevish and aggravated tone.

"Yes, sir!" stammered Prichard apologetically, "I

couldn't very well help seeing it, sir."

"No, I suppose not."

Then, in a rather uncertain manner as he held out the

letter. "Here, you read it!"

Prichard carefully closed all the doors before he took the letter from Simon's hand. Then, seating himself on a chair at his employer's side, he read:

"Tonga, February 10, 19-, -"

"Tonga, did you say?" interrupted Simon. "Where is Tonga?"

"Somewhere in the South Seas. It must be a long ways off. The letter is dated more than two months ago."

"Well; go on; maybe we shall find out."

Prichard continued to read:

"My dear Simon:-

So many years have passed since I have written any thing but the briefest of business letters—even these being confined to one or two a year—that my hand has lost its cunning and my brain, too, I fear. You will, therefore, forgive me if I write of nothing but the matter in hand.

If I remember, my last letter to you was written at the time of my wife's death, some forty-five years ago. We were then

living in Samoa."

"Oh, yes," interrupted Simon. "I remember—and that reminds me, Prichard, how about that Hawaiian sugar concession? The matter has been before the House committee long enough. If it's necessary to bring pressure to bear, let me know. It's too valuable to neglect." Then suddenly, "but go on with Matthew's letter."

Again Prichard read:

"After my wife died I took my little boy, Horace, and came here to Tonga. I suppose you would best know the place as the Friendly Islands. You remember we used to read about them in the voyages of Captain Cook, when we were boys."

"Yes, yes," exclaimed Simon rubbing his hands, "I

remember! Why they're all cannibals down there!"

"Not now, I guess," ventured Prichard, "but if you like I'll have some of the clerks find out something about them."

"No, no, never mind! Go on with the letter!"

"When Horace grew up he married-"

"Whom, I wonder," again interrupted Simon, "a cannibal?" Prichard again read:

"-an English girl, the daughter of a missionary. Sixteen years ago, in an epidemic of tropical fever, both Horace and his wife were taken away, leaving to my care their two-year-old daughter, Mary; and now then to the business in hand."

Prichard stopped to fold the sheet and Simon pushed the morning paper toward him.

"Mary!" he exclaimed pointing to the picture.

Prichard gave the picture but a casual glance as he continued to read:

"Some weeks ago, while in Nukaulofa, the capital of the Islands, I saw a New York paper and in it was your picture. It did not tell much about you, but enough to convince me that you are a man of some wealth and prominence."

"Huh!" grunted Simon. "They must have spoken better of me than usual."

Prichard read on:

"It then occurred to me that Mary ought to see something of her own race and people, and so I have decided to send her up to you for a little visit. There is in the harbor a tramp ship, which will sail for San Francisco tomorrow. I am sending Mary to you in care of the captain and his good wife, who happens to be with him. They tell me that it is now possible to put her on a train in San Francisco, on which she can go right through to New York without change. The captain will do this for me. I trust—inasmuch as she is my granddaughter—that you will so far overlook our past differences as to let her stay with you and your wife for a few months and then find some suitable way of sending her back to me. She is all I have.

Mary will tell you all about me when you see her. My heart is

too sad to write more, but I owe this much to Mary.

Your brother, Matthew Brent.

P.S.

Believe me, you will not find Mary quite such a savage as you may expect.

M.B."

During the reading of the last of the letter Simon had made no comment, but sat with eyes fixed on the picture before him. Even after Prichard had finished, he still remained silent until Prichard remarked in a questioning voice:

"Well?"

Then he broke forth, not in a torrent of words, but in that cold even voice which those who had found them-

selves in his power had learned to fear.

"It is not well! Matthew is the same idealistic fool he always was. My wife, indeed! Does he think I was insane enough to get married? After all the quarrels we have had, doesn't he know my only wife is 'business'? I have no time to waste on children. I won't have her!"

"She doesn't look like much of a child, sir," suggested

Prichard indicating the picture.

"The picture is probably a fake. 'Phone over to the Planet and find out. Tell Duvall I want to know what he means by printing a fake picture and saying it is my niece."

Prichard did as bidden. Without ringing off he reported to Simon that the picture was a snapshot made by the *Planet's* special correspondent in San Francisco five days previous.

"Let me talk to him," said Simon savagely, taking the

'phone from Prichard's hand.

"That you, Duvall?" he demanded.

Being assured that it was, he exclaimed: "What do you mean by printing a picture of my niece in the *Planet* without my permission?"

"We didn't say she was your niece, Mr. Brent," was what he heard over the 'phone. "We said she was the young woman who claims to be your niece."

"That's worse yet. Of course she's my niece! The

only living relative I have—except my brother."

"But we knew the other papers might have the picture and we-"

"I can't help what the other papers do! Don't I own

the Planet? Hadn't I ought to be able to have a little something to say as to how it is run?"

"But you've said so often that you didn't want to bother with it; that you didn't care what was in it, except

when you wanted to use it-"

"Never mind what I said! After this if any one ever dares to hint that she isn't my niece, he shall pay for it. She has come half around the world to make me a visit," and he set the 'phone down with no little vehemence.

Prichard looked at him in amazement.

"I thought you said you wouldn't have her?"

"Who said I wouldn't have her! Isn't she Matthew's granddaughter? Where else would she come if she didn't come here? Find out where she is and see that she has a private car the rest of the way. And Prichard," rising to his feet in his excitement, "you take a week off and see that proper accommodations are prepared for her. Get your wife to help you, and have the bills sent to me."

Then as an after thought: "I can't be bothered with children myself, but they have to be looked after just the

same."

After Prichard had gone, Simon sat for a long time with his brother's letter in his hand—not reading it, but with half closed eyes, running back in his mind over the years since he had started to attain the place in the financial world which he now occupied. Presently he summoned the office boy.

"Billy," he ordered, "bring me all the morning papers."

The command having been obeyed, Simon spent the next half hour in reading all they had to say about the girl, who upon landing in San Francisco six days before, had set the reporters wild by announcing that she was the grandniece of Simon Brent.

He was still reading when Billy, the office boy, an-

nounced:

"Mrs. James Buchanan Durham. She says she wants to see you on a matter of great importance."

Simon's face grew hard.

James Buchanan Durham had been the only close friend Simon Brent had ever had. At the age of fifty he had married a young wife, a thing for which Simon never forgave him. When he died, some three years previous to the date upon which the story opens, he left his widow and son in affluence; but contrary to Simon's advice, the widow had insisted upon making some bad investments, which had so disgusted the aged financier that for the past six months he had refused to see her. He was now about to refuse again; but as he glanced at the picture of Mary Brent spread out on the desk before him, a thought came into his mind which caused him to order the boy to admit her.

"This seems to be my off day," he muttered. "I might as well have all the foolishness over at once and be done

with it."

He slowly arose to his feet and awaited Mrs. Durham's entrance.

It is not difficult to describe Mrs. Durham. She was a type with which all are familiar. Well rounded in figure and with a face made free from wrinkles by the aid of the masseur's art, she easily could have passed for forty, had it not been for her son, Arthur, whose twenty-seven years were well outlined upon his handsome features. With an inherited hauteur, which had not been in the least diminished when she married James Buchanan Durham and his wealth, Mrs. Durham was so trained in social diplomacy. that for the moment her graciousness almost deceived the aged financier.

"I am so much indebted to you for granting me this interview," she declared, as she extended her hand with a smile that would have done credit to a Talleyrand.

"I am in such distress."

"Indeed!" replied Simon, not to be outdone in diplomacy now that he had put his hand to the plow. "And how can I serve you, madam?"

"I am almost afraid to tell you."

"Tut! Tut!" from Simon as he proffered her a chair with studied politeness. "Fear is the father of failure."

"I know your time is valuable," she began.

"Then don't waste it!" snapped Simon.

Her face flushed.

"I won't," she said crisply. "I need forty thousand dollars at once."

Simon eyed her quizzically.

"On what security?" he asked.

"These," and she drew from her sable muff a little package of bonds.

Simon gave them a hasty glance as she held them

towards him.

"I wouldn't give you four thousand for the lot," he exclaimed without even taking them from her hand. "Where did you get them?"

"Mr. Morris bought them for me."

"Morris? Uh huh! I see!" and Simon raised his spectacles to his forehead and looked at her searchingly from under his shaggy eyebrows.

After a moment he reached out and took the bonds

from her hands, now trembling with anxiety.

"No," he continued as he slowly turned them over. "I wouldn't loan you forty thousand dollars on these, but," and he rubbed his sharp chin meditatively, "I will let you have the money on one condition."

She regarded him in the utmost surprise. "What is

it?" she finally asked.

"That you will look after my niece during her visit to me."

"I was not aware that you had a niece," she said coldly,

"and my position in society is not to be compromised for

twice forty thousand dollars."

"Oh, you women!" he exclaimed under his breath. Then as he pulled his spectacles down over his eyes: "I am not surprised at your attitude. Neither was I aware that I had a niece until an hour ago—although—" he added grimly, "the papers have been suggesting it, as the lawyers say, for the past week."

Mrs. Durham's face cleared. "I understand," she said,

"So she really is your niece?"

"Matthew vouches for her over his own signature," and he held out to her his brother's letter.

Mrs. Durham perused it carefully.

"She must be a perfect savage," was her only remark as she handed back the epistle.

"So it seems."

"And I believe she has a savage for a companion." Simon raised his eyebrows.

"They call her a tropical violet," he said grimly. "She

can't be so bad."

"Am I to take charge of both of them?"

"Who else?"

Mrs. Durham slowly shook her head.

"Forty thousand dollars is too little; unless," she added, "you will find me a purchaser for these bonds."

Simon raised his head and regarded her intently.

"Madam," he said in his short snappy manner, "I have been misjudging you. I did not think you had that much business in you. Leave the bonds with me and consider the matter settled."

Mrs. Durham arose to go.

"When do you expect your niece?" she asked.

"In two or three days. I will advise you as soon as she arrives. In the meantime I will see that forty thousand dollars is placed to your credit. Good morning!"

CHAPTER II

HAD Mary Brent known the sensation her arrival in America would occasion, it is doubtful if either she or her grandfather would have consented to her coming; but it was in total ignorance of the prominent position her uncle occupied that she landed in San Francisco one beautiful day in April and was taken by Captain Eckstrom and his estimable wife to the Golden Gate Hotel, a modest hostelry much frequented by sea-faring men of the higher rank.

There are good newspaper men in San Francisco.

That is why there are good newspapers.

One of these men, whose business it was to seek for news from incoming steamers, ran afoul of Captain Eckstrom before he had been ashore an hour.

The good captain, although he had heard at various times of Simon Brent, was not aware of his importance—the importance given a man by the possession of many millions of dollars; but Captain Eckstrom was enough of an old salt to see that a good yarn could be spun about a girl who had spent her whole life on a South Sea Island and was now making a twelve thousand mile trip to visit her grandfather's brother—a relative who was in ignorance of her very existence.

Because the reporter knew his business, it did not take him ten seconds after the name of Mary Brent's uncle was mentioned to see the value of the story. He asked for an interview, which was readily granted, and

the sight of Mary but added zest to the story-for Mary was a beautiful girl. There was no denying this, no matter what particular style one might prefer. Her figure was as slender as a Naiad and fully as graceful. Fair-haired and blue-eyed, her pearly teeth glistened through lips of cherry red, which matched to perfection her rosy cheeks. As for her attire—but why go into details. Suffice it to say that she was clad in garments which had been her grandmother's-garments which her grandfather had guarded sacredly for forty-five years. He had bestowed them upon Mary as she was leaving Tonga with the declaration that she would be "right in style, for styles are sure to come around every fifty years." Whether the statement was true or not, the gown of flowered silk, with the tight fitting bodice and deeply flounced skirt became her well, and never did a newspaper camera have a fairer subject.

Inspired by Mary's blue eyes, the reporter gave full play to his fancy; and no more romantic story—if you are willing to take the reporter's word for it—ever came

in through the Golden Gate.

The following morning, not only his own paper, but all the other papers belonging to the same service, played it for a feature, and Mary awoke, after a quiet night's

rest, to find herself the news center of the day.

For a few hours the story was received without question. Then the papers which had been scooped on the story began to get busy. When Simon was interviewed in New York and refused to confirm the relationship, it was hinted in broad language that Mary was an adventuress. All of which disturbed Mary not at all, for she did not read the papers and was unconscious of what was said about her.

Ignorant of what a big city looked like, for the first two days after landing in San Francisco the girl was completely dazed by its noise and confusion. After that, her curiosity began to get the better of her fear, and she tried to make the city fit into her ideas of what was going on about her—ideas based almost entirely upon her knowledge of life as gleaned from the writings of one William Shakespeare, the study of which had been made her daily occupation by her grandfather.

"If you are familiar with Shakespeare and the Bible," he had often told her—and he still believed it—"you can be dropped into any part of the civilized globe and be

considered well educated."

So it was that she read both books diligently, and from the former had gained most of her ideas of men and the world.

Because of her timidity and the unusual attention she attracted, she was greatly embarrassed, said little, and for a time experienced a touch of homesickness. This soon passed away and she was quite her natural self by the time she and her Tonganese traveling companion, Ila-Ila, were placed in charge of the Pullman Company en route for New York.

"I think Uncle Simon must have received Daddy's letter by this time," Mary said to Ila-Ila as the train was nearing Kansas City on its way eastward. "Captain Eckstrom said he ought to get it early Saturday morning."

"Ila-Ila doesn't know," was the calm reply. "Ila-Ila is not awake. Ila-Ila must be in a dream. Isn't Missy

afraid she will awake?"

Mary laughed, her spirits having been completely restored by her three days in the Pullman and the attention bestowed upon her by the passengers, who were greatly interested in the girl and her quaint speech.

"No, indeed," she replied, "Daddy has told me all about the cars and I seem to have been expecting this

all my life. Methinks I should hardly be surprised if I were to meet Hamlet."

"Who is Hamlet? Ila-Ila doesn't know."

"Of course you do not. Hamlet was a prince of Denmark, a fair land in the North Sea. He no longer lives; but perchance Uncle Simon will take us to Denmark. It cannot be far distant from New York," and she let her eyes wander over the rapidly changing landscape.

"Uncle Simon will be surprised to see us," said Ila-Ila, again referring to Simon Brent by the only name

she knew.

"Yes," replied Mary, thoughtfully, "methinks he will. Daddy says he is a stern man, but that nobody could be displeased with so fair a grandniece—and Daddy wouldn't lie."

"Lie?" queried Ila-Ila. "Lie about what?"

"About my being pretty, forsooth."

The little maid looked at her with wide open eyes.

"Are the sunshine and the flowers and the birds beautiful?" she asked in a soft musical voice, "and is not Missy's face like the flowers, her voice like the birds and her hair like the sunshine?"

Mary's cheeks grew pink. She twined her arms lov-

ingly about Ila-Ila's neck as she whispered:

"Mayhap; but Ila-Ila is like the starlight, and her voice like the water that ripples against the shore at the foot of the great palm. Look!"

She turned Ila-Ila's face to the little mirror between

the car windows and peeped over her head.

"It is the twilight and the dawn," she laughed, and

Ila-Ila laughed with her out of the love in her heart.

When the train stopped in Kansas City, a strange thing happened. The conductor, who, up to this time had seemed to the girls a most important personage, approached with his cap in his hand, followed by two other

important-looking men and two white-coated porters.

"This is Miss Brent," said the conductor to the most

important-looking man.

Then to Mary: "This is Superintendent Barry of the M. and T. He has an order from Mr. Simon Brent to furnish you with a private car for the rest of your journey."

Mary looked at him in astonishment.

"A private car!" she exclaimed. "I do not understand you, good sir. Prithee explain!"

The passengers crowded around.

"What is it?" asked one.

The conductor repeated his words.

"Then she really is Simon Brent's niece?" queried another.

Mary turned toward the speaker with flashing eyes.

"Has any one ever dared doubt it?" she asked; and for the life of him the speaker could not reply, but slowly sank back out of sight.

Her words and actions were so different from the gentleness she had heretofore displayed that the other passengers regarded her with mingled surprise and admiration.

"She's a Brent, all right!" laughed one of them as the porters gathered up her luggage, and Mary and Ila-Ila were escorted from the car. "You can call Simon Brent all the hard names you please and he will only smile; but let any one question his veracity and he becomes a tornado."

Installed in the private car of the General Manager,

Mary entered upon an entirely new phase of life.

Now that she was recognized as the possible heiress of Simon Brent, she became a personage of importance. Although the only persons about her through whose demeanor the change could manifest itself were the porter,

waiter and train crew, Mary was quick to detect it; but it did not affect her in the least. It was right in line with all the other experiences through which she had passed since landing in the United States. Not for one instant, however, did she consider that this exaltation was any more her portion than that of Ila-Ila.

"It is just like the gorgeousness of Solomon," Mary said to Ila-Ila, "and I feel like the Queen of Sheba must

have felt when she first beheld it."

"It must be a dream!" Ila-Ila insisted. "It cannot be

real. Even the birds do not fly as fast as we."

"It is just as Daddy told me it would be—only," she added after a moment, "he wot not that Uncle Simon had a car all his own."

"She acts just like she was done born to it," remarked the white-aproned waiter to the white-jacketed porter.

And why shouldn't she?

In Tonga, every native on the Island had always done her bidding and she had taken their homage as a matter of course. She would have done as much for one of them had it been necessary—but it never was.

Her first disappointment came upon her arrival in New York, where she was met at the train by Prichard.

"Oh, Uncle Simon!" she exclaimed as she threw both arms around Prichard's neck and kissed him. "I am so glad to see you! This is Ila-Ila!" and she pulled her companion forward.

Prichard blushed at the honor shown him, but managed

to stammer out:

"I—I'm not your Uncle Simon. I'm his clerk!"

"His clerk!" exclaimed Mary, drawing back. "A scrivener? Prithee, good sir, where is my uncle? Kindly take me to him at once!"

"Why-," again stammered Prichard, completely

abashed in the presence of this regal young person, "he's busy. He couldn't come to the train, but he'll be at the hotel."

"Hotel!" exclaimed Mary. "Perchance you mean an inn. Does my uncle, forsooth, reside at an inn?"

"Your uncle lives at his club."

"Club?" repeated Mary, completely at a loss to comprehend the statement. "I do not know—" If Prichard heard he paid no attention to her words, but added abruptly: "This way, please," as he hurried toward the automobile, wondering what Simon would think of this beautiful, old-fashioned young woman, who was about as different from those who surrounded her as one could possibly imagine.

"I hope I'll be forgiven the lie," he thought to himself as they sped toward the hotel, "and I do hope he will go

and see her."

Prichard need not have been concerned.

Simon had done nothing but think about the girl from the minute he had given his first order regarding her.

As soon as he knew the train was in, Simon left his office secretly and made his way to the hotel. Here he secured a place from which he could see her when she entered, without being seen himself.

With the very first sight, his heart stirred.

"My own flesh and blood," he muttered, as he grasped

the back of a chair for support.

As he stood thus observing her, it would have been impossible to put his thoughts into words. For years he had been thinking of himself as absolutely alone; and now to be suddenly confronted with this beautiful creature, who appeared to have just stepped out of another period, and to realize she was actually something to him—that she had come half way around the world to see him—was almost more than he could believe.

Such an impression did she make upon Simon that his complete conquest was achieved then and there. It even angered him to see the curiosity seekers who had gathered to catch a glimpse of her—for from the minute he had admitted to the public that Mary was his niece, her progress eastward had been minutely noted by every metropolitan daily.

"I'll put a stop to this curiosity business," he muttered between his thin lips as he surveyed the crowd. I'll buy a

house. Yes, I'll buy a house today."

He was as good as his word. As soon as he had seen her take the elevator, he entered a telephone booth and gave his real estate broker an order for the purchase. As he was leaving the booth he ran into Prichard.

"I didn't know you were here, sir!" exclaimed the clerk.

Then in a confidential whisper: "She's here!"

The corners of Simon Brent's mouth twitched.

"So I see!" he snapped, "and," indicating the crowd, "all New York knows it."

Then in an undertone: "did she ask you anything about me?"

Prichard chuckled. "I should say she did. Flew right at me and kissed me, and called me Uncle Simon."

"Called you what?"

"Uncle Simon! Took me for you and was terribly disappointed when she found out I wasn't. I told her you'd see her at the hotel. Of course I knew you wouldn't want to, but—"

"Knew I wouldn't want to?" interrupted Simon. "Prichard, you're a fool! Of course I want to see her. What do you suppose I'm here for? Take me right up to her room; and, Prichard, I've just ordered Randall and Phelps to buy me a house. A hotel is no place for a girl."

Without more words, but with many misgivings, Prichard led the way to Mary's apartment. When they

reached it Simon was trembling so greatly that it filled the solicitious clerk with sudden fear.

"You are not ill, are you, sir?" he asked.

"No, no!" replied Simon. "Only a little nervous at meeting the first of my own flesh and blood that I've seen

for fifty years. Do you wonder?"

Prichard did not; nor did he wonder a moment later when they entered the room and Mary, with a little sob exclaimed: "Oh, Uncle Simon! Didn't you want to see me?" But he did wonder to see Simon take the girl quickly in his arms and reply: "Of course I wanted to see you! Has any one dared to say I didn't?" the while he looked savagely at Prichard from under his shaggy eyebrows.

"N-No," was Mary's somewhat timid reply as she noted the frown upon his brow; "but you failed to greet me at the train and you had me sent to an inn. I thought

that perchance you and my aunt—"
"Your aunt?" exclaimed Simon. "Your aunt who?"

"Why, your wife. I trust she is well?"

"I have no wife!" snapped Simon; and then in a kindlier tone: "I had you brought here because it's a good hotel; but I can see you don't like it. Tomorrow we'll have a house of our own."

"Oh, I see!" she said. "This is but a temporary abode until you are through housecleaning." Then turning suddenly: "But you haven't met Ila-Ila. Nerissa!" and she led forward the little Tonganese maid, who stood by in awed astonishment.

Simon bestowed but one glance upon Ila-Ila—considering that quite sufficient—and again turned his gaze upon

Mary, whom he fairly devoured with his eyes.

"Matthew's granddaughter!" he kept saying over and over to himself. "Matthew's granddaughter! I can hardly believe it! And how is Matthew?"

"Matthew?" interrogatively. Then with a rippling laugh: "You mean Daddy! He's very happy, thank you, sir!"

Simon regarded her earnestly.

"I'm sure of that," he said. "He must be! How's his health?"

"Forsooth, I never heard him say; but he can't help being healthy, if he's happy!"

"Oh, he can't!" laughed Simon, eyeing her curiously.

"That's certainly good philosophy."

"That isn't philosophy, Uncle Simon. That is truth." Simon looked at Prichard and his eyes twinkled.

"Then you don't consider philosophy truth?" he

queried.

Oh, no, sir!" was her quick reply. "You find philosophy in Shakespeare, and you know that's fiction. You have to read the Bible to find the truth."

Simon and Prichard exchanged knowing glances, but neither spoke until Simon changed the subject by remarking:

"Prichard, have you notified Mrs. Durham of my niece's

arrival?"

"No, sir, but I will at once," and he immediately proceeded to call up that estimable lady by 'phone, while Simon plied Mary with questions concerning her grandfather and her South Sea Island home.

"She is altogether the finest girl I ever met," Simon confided to Prichard some hours later, "and while I am much interested in hearing about my brother and his peculiarities, I am more interested in Mary and her quaint speech."

CHAPTER III

INDER Mrs. Durham's supervision, Mary was speedily domiciled in her new home and her tutelage in modern manners begun.

Never having had anyone upon whom he could lavish his money, Simon put no limit upon the expenditures, either as to the furnishing of the house or upon the girl's wardrobe.

"I don't know anything about such matters," he told Mrs. Durham, "and I don't want to. Providing an investment is a good one, the greater the amount invested, the greater the returns. My niece looks to me like the best thing I ever promoted. Use your own judgment and send the bills to me."

Having been given such instructions, Mrs. Durham speedily turned the residence into a palace and gowned her protegé like a princess.

To Mary, Mrs. Durham was a wonder.

For the first few months of her novitiate she did whatever Mrs. Durham bade her. After that—well, it is sufficient to say that the time soon came when Mrs. Durham was not only glad, but proud to take her cue from the 'little savage,' the name she had used in first describing her to her son, Arthur.

"Is she as bad as that?" he had asked with a laugh.

"Fully!" his mother had replied.

Then as a further description: "The only difference I can see between her and that Tonganese girl she has

brought along as her boon companion is her color—and there isn't a great deal of difference in that respect. She's the whitest savage I ever saw."

"Who," queried Arthur in surprise. "Miss Brent?"

"No, stupid, the companion! Ila-Ila, she calls her. Who ever heard such an outlandish name?"

"I don't see anything outlandish in it, mother. It reminds one of Minnehaha—Laughing Water, as the poet interprets it."

Remembering this conversation, Arthur received the surprise of his life the first time he saw Mary.

"Savage, indeed!" he exclaimed under his breath.

"She's a queen!"

With him it was a case of love at first sight—and Arthur Durham was far from being a sentimental youth. In fact, he had all the up-to-date aversion to what the word sentimental implies. He prided himself that he was a very practical young man, and his business associates agreed with his estimate of himself.

When he hinted his feeling with regard to Mary, his

mother was much concerned.

"She's a penniless nobody," she declared.

"She's Simon Brent's niece," he replied.

"Simon Brent!" and Mrs. Durham sniffed the air. "Well, who's he?"

"He's certainly not penniless," laughed Arthur.

"No," admitted Mrs. Durham, "but he's a nobody—socially."

Arthur laughed long and loud.

"You're all right, mother," he finally managed to ejaculate, "but you'll have a hard time making people agree with you. The glamour of Simon Brent's money sheds a halo around him to most of us. Not that we admire his methods; but we are obliged to admit his perspicacity. The glamour of this same money puts the

spot light on his niece. The added possibility that she may some day inherit a few millions makes her a decided somebody in New York."

With this Mrs. Durham was obliged to be satisfied.

That others agreed with Arthur was evidenced by the fact that it was only a few weeks until all of Mrs. Durham's multitudinous invitations included her charming protegé. Ere Mary had been in New York three months, she told Ila-Ila one day that she was so busy that she didn't have time to think.

"Why does Missy want to think?" asked the little maid. "Why, forsooth, if I do not take time to think, I shall forget some of the people and things I have seen when we return to Tonga."

"When will that be?"

"Oh, not for a long time! Uncle Simon says we haven't begun to see America yet."

The maid heaved a deep sigh.

"Ila-Ila is sorry," she said. "Ila-Ila would rather be in

Tonga."

If Ila-Ila would, Mary was very sure she would not. She liked New York. She enjoyed the unusual gaiety. She reveled in the luxury. She gloried in the homage paid her.

Had she been different from what she was, she would

have been spoiled.

That she was not spoiled, was due to her years of freedom from any sense of the power of money. She believed that people were kind to her because they loved her. She had not yet come to know the deceitfulness of riches. She was sure that her Uncle Simon loved her for herself alone, as she loved him. It never occurred to her that others might be different.

As for Simon, he absolutely adored her.

Immediately after Mrs. Durham had put the household

in running order and installed a suitable housekeeper, Simon deserted his club and took up his abode at the new home.

"I am going to live with my niece," he told his acquaintances.

Never by word or deed did he intimate that this was not the exact condition. Mary, not he, was the head of the household. He was simply an obedient slave.

Arthur Durham was not the only one of the numerous men to whom Mary was introduced, who were impressed with the girl. Her naivette and ingenuousness would alone have proven a great attraction, but when there were added to this a beautiful face and the glamour of wealth, to which Durham had alluded, her power of attraction became well nigh irresistible.

Among those thus attracted was Gilson Gage.

Although a comparatively young man, Gilson Gage was already considered among the successful financiers of the day. He had frequently been mentioned as Simon Brent's greatest rival for the control of the Street. He had consummated several successful financial coups and on one or two occasions had taken his profits off Simon.

Naturally, therefore, Simon did not like him.

Mary knew nothing of this. When Gage was first introduced to her she liked his looks. He had a pleasing personality, and exerted himself to gain her favor. Despite his extreme practicality and business acumen, he had in him a vein of sentiment that appealed to the girl. Reared, as she had been, in an atmosphere of romance—her books, her surroundings and her grandfather all tending that way—she enjoyed Gage's conversation more than any one she met, with the possible exception of Arthur Durham.

She did not, however, consider them in the same class. Durham was to her simply a most agreeable young man in whom she did not look for much wisdom. He was a charming companion and a model escort. She was taken with his abrupt manner and his up-to-date speech, so different from her own. She liked his breezy ways, and she was particularly attracted by an odd little smile which almost continually hovered on his lips and which seemed to say to her: "Fear not."

Gage was classified by her as "dignified." She always thought of him as "Mr. Gage." His words seemed words of wisdom, and she often thought that, next to her uncle Simon, he would be better able to give advice than

any man she knew.

The second three months of her stay marked a new phase in Mary's development. She began to detect beneath the surface some of the insincerity which has unnecessarily come to be looked upon as a necessity of social life. She began to see that some of the attention paid her was merest flattery.

Then it was that she sat herself upon the edge of Ila-Ila's bed one night and exclaimed in the words of her

favorite heroine:

"By my troth, Ila-Ila, my body is aweary of this great world.' Methinks their is more happiness in Tonga."

Ila-Ila opened her sleepy eyes in astonishment as she

replied:

"You know it!"

The tone and manner of speech were so unlike Ila-Ila that Mary burst into hearty laughter.

"Why, Ila-Ila, you are using slang!" she exclaimed.

"Slang?" and the little maid opened her eyes wider. "That is what Mr. Durham says."

"And I suppose whatever Mr. Durham says must be right?"

"Doesn't Missy think so?"

Mary shrugged her shoulders.

"I am beginning to think that nobody says what he means."

"Why, Missy!"

"Except you and Daddy," said Mary.

She arose and went to her room, leaving Ila-Ila to wonder at her mood.

Some weeks later, at Mrs. Durham's suggestion, Simon gave a reception in honor of his niece. When it came to sending out the invitations, Simon gave Mrs. Durham a list of those who should not be invited, instead of those who should. The list contained the names of so many who had entertained Mary, that Mrs. Durham was completely nonplused as to the course she should pursue.

In her perplexity she turned to Mary.

Then for the first time Mary became commander-inchief and Mrs. Durham was demoted to the rank of subaltern.

Kneeling beside Simon's chair after dinner that evening, Mary placed the matter before him in the fewest

words possible and closed by asking:

"Wherein lieth the difference, Uncle Simon? If some are worse than others, it is only because they know no better. Daddy says everybody would be good if they knew how."

Simon regarded the girl in silence for several minutes. "That sounds just like Matthew," he finally said slowly. "If he had said it to me when I last saw him, I should have told him he was an idealistic fool. Now I am not sure but it is true."

"Of course it's true, or Daddy wouldn't have said it."

"Does Matthew always tell the truth?" asked Simon quizzically.

"Fie, for shame, to ask such a question, Uncle Simon!

But methinks it is but a jest."

"Yes, yes!" he answered hastily. "I was only joking.

As for the people, ask whom you will, if they have been nice to you."

That is how Gilson Gage happened to be among the

guests.

Simon was seated in his chair, surrounded by a group of young people—among whom was Mary—when Gage approached to pay his respects. At sight of him, Simon's face darkened. Mary noted the look, although ignorant of its cause. She laid one hand quickly upon Simon's shoulder as she extended her other to Gage.

The light touch brought Simon to himself and—in response to Mary's "You know Mr. Gage, Uncle Simon"—caused him to say with a tinge of sarcasm: "Oh, yes; I know Mr. Gage. A man could hardly be in business in

Gotham and not know Mr. Gage."

"You flatter me, Mr. Brent," replied Gage, adroitly ignoring the double meaning of Simon's words.

"I never flatter," was Simon's sharp rejoinder. "I

mean just what I say."

Further conversation along this line was prevented by

the approach of other guests.

Later in the evening Gage found an opportunity to say to Mary: "I am greatly indebted to you, Miss Brent, for your invitation here tonight and for the kindly reception given me by your uncle. His words mean much to a man in my position."

"I am so glad; but prithee thank me not," replied Mary with the utmost candor, her pure mind never surmising that there might have been a double meaning to her

uncle's words.

"Yes, indeed," continued Gage, recognizing the sincerity of her speech. "That a man with such vast interests should have taken note of so obscure an operator as I, is an incentive to greater endeavor. I trust I may be allowed to call again."

"'Twill be a pleasure, indeed, to receive any friend of

my uncle's."

As Gage withdrew he bestowed upon her a look of the deepest admiration, a look which was noted by Ila-Ila, from an obscure corner in which she had found refuge, and who—by Mary's express command—was observing all that was passing. The look was also seen by Durham, who, in spite of his effort not to make a spectacle of himself, had been unable to keep his eyes off his fair hostess for more than two minutes at a time during the whole evening.

"Mr. Gage seems a most interesting individual," he said

as he took that gentleman's place at Mary's side.

"You say truly," was the earnest assent. "He has seen much of the world and, like Othello, tells many

strange tales."

"Othello? Oh, yes! He was the colored gentleman who smothered his wife with a pillow. I am afraid Gage resembles him in more respects than his story-telling ability," was Durham's somewhat savage retort.

The tone of his voice caused Mary to observe him with

considerable astonishment.

"I am quite sure he does not," she said gently.

Durham's face flushed at the implied rebuke and he explained in a milder tone:

"Gage isn't my kind of a man. I'm sure he isn't yours."

"No?" with a look of surprise.

"No; but with your innate goodness, you see nothing but good in anyone. Far be it from me to open your eyes to the other side."

"Then you think there is another side, Mr. Durham?"

"Unfortunately, yes. Most men have two sides. It is only natural, I suppose, that Gage should try to show you his best."

"Mayhap 'tis so," admitted Mary with just the sug-

gestion of a sigh. "I've seen very little of the bad side. I am sure Daddy and Uncle Simon have not two sides."

"I admire your faith in mankind," said Durham seriously. "Despite my effort to see only good, however, I am forced to believe that every mortal has two sides."

Had Durham known the trouble this remark was to have caused him later on, he would have bitten off his

tongue sooner than have made it.

"Well," said Mary thoughtfully, after a brief pause, "we are told where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.' I may be living in a fool's paradise, but I enjoy it. Besides, just the little bad I have seen, warns me it is something I do not want to know."

"There is no doubt of that," was Durham's emphatic reply. "Suppose we do not discuss the bad any more. Let's talk about something good—about, well, about you

for instance."

"Do you think I'm good?" she asked innocently.

"The best I ever saw," was the decided answer.

"Oh, thank you, sir! I trust I am."

"Take my word for it and don't worry!" and the smile

she liked so much spread itself over his face.

Mary looked at him in silent wonderment. His abrupt speech and odd expressions were still so strange to her that she did not always grasp his meaning.

"Don't worry," she thought to herself. "Why should I? Oh, dear!" she exclaimed aloud. "Methinks I never

shall learn."

"Never learn what?" and Durham regarded her with interest.

"To know what your words mean."

"They mean just what they say, of course," was the incongruous reply.

"Forsooth, I doubt it not! 'Tis I who am stupid!"

"Stupid? You stupid? Why you are the-"

To just what extent Durham might have given vent to his opinions there is no telling, had not Mrs. Durham espied them and broken up their téte-a-téte as only a well-trained chaperon knows how.

"I wonder what he was going to say?" thought Mary as Mrs. Durham led her away; and the interrupted conversation was the event of the evening which lingered longest in her mind after the reception was a thing of the past.

CHAPTER IV

Mary's progress from the ideas of fifty years ago—gathered from her grandfather—into the modern mode of thinking, was much more rapid than might have been expected. So quickly did she adapt herself to her changed conditions, both in speech and action, that one meeting her about this time would never have believed that she was not to the manner born.

Just about as rapidly, also, did she change from her childish ways to those of a coy and coquettish maiden.

Simon, although totally indifferent to all affairs of the heart, was as shrewd in the reading of feminine character as in the masculine—and that he was past-master of the latter art, his wealth fully attested. Perceiving thereby the sudden change in Mary, he began to seek for a reason and was not long in discovering what he sought. His discovery, however, was the result of accident rather than of wisdom.

Awaiting her return from a drive one afternoon, he fell asleep in a darkened nook and did not hear the big car when it stopped in the porte-cochere; nor did he know that Mary and Ila-Ila had returned, until he was awakened by their chatter on the other side of the tapestry.

He started to rise, but the conversation attracted his

attention and he stopped to listen.

"Then why did he look at Missy like that?" Ila-Ila was asking.

"Like what?" interrogated Mary.

"Like the cat looks at the little bird it would eat. Ila-Ila likes it not."

Mary laughed.

"Methinks Mr. Gage would hardly take time to eat any one; he thinks too much of his business. But I would that he would stay away. I like not old men."

As Gilson Gage was under forty, he probably would not have felt himself highly flattered could he have heard

the expression.

"Not like old men!" exclaimed Ila-Ila. "Missy not like Uncle Simon?"

"Of course! I love Uncle Simon. I don't mean in that way."

"How does Missy mean?"

"Well, as I like Mr. Durham, for instance."

"Does Missy like him?"

"He is just like Bassanio," was Mary's uncertain reply. "How I should have feared, had I been Portia, that he might choose the wrong casket."

"Who, Mr. Durham?"

"No, Bassanio-Portia's sweetheart."

"Who was Portia?"

"Didn't I ever tell you about Portia?" asked Mary in surprise.

"Missy told Ila-Ila about Juliet. Was she anything

like that?"

"Yes, only different," was the laughing response. "Portia was a young woman just like me, and she had a maid named Nerissa, who wasn't really a maid; more like a friend—just like you. Portia's father was a very rich man—most as rich as Uncle Simon, I guess—and when he died he left a strange will, in which he gave all his wealth to Portia; but he did not leave her free to marry whom she would. Instead, he left three caskets, in one of which was hidden Portia's picture. Every suitor for her hand

had to choose one of the caskets. Whoever chose the one containing her picture, she would be obliged to marry whether she liked him or not.

"Many chose and failed until at last Bassanio came to woo. Portia loved him, and oh, how she wished he would choose the right casket!"

"Then why didn't she tell him the right one?" interrupted Ila-Ila.

"That would not have been honorable. No one would do a dishonorable deed."

Simon, behind the curtain, chuckled to himself and became even more attentive.

"But," continued Mary, "because love guided his choice, and not the greed of gold, Bassanio chose the right casket."

"I'm so glad!" exclaimed Ila-Ila. "But nobody has left Missy three caskets."

Mary laughed.

"No, nor great wealth either. There are not many who would seek me. Daddy's house in Tonga would not amount to much here."

"But Missy has this house. I heard Uncle Simon give it to her."

"But only to live in while we are visiting him," replied Mary, "just as he gives us the automobile and fine dresses and all the pretty things in the house."

"But he might leave it all to Missy when he dies. I

have heard Mrs. Durham say so."

"You must not listen to such foolish talk," declared Mary severely. "Uncle Simon is not going to die. But I would rather Daddy would not leave me anything than that he should not leave me free to marry whom I will," and Mary heaved a little sigh as she picked up her cloak and left the room.

"There's no foolishness about her," declared Simon as

he slowly emerged from his retreat after the girls had left. "She knows her own mind. She's a Brent all right!"

and he again chuckled to himself.

Having discovered that Mary was interested in Arthur Durham, Simon began to take especial notice of the young man. As a lad he had a great liking for him. He would have been glad at any time after his father's death to have assisted him; but, as before stated, Mrs. Durham interfered so much in the management of her husband's estate, that Simon had practically ignored them.

Now he determined that he would try the young man out. As a result he began throwing small orders in the way of the brokerage firm of which Arthur was a member. Without an exception his commissions were well executed.

Then Simon began to send for the young man personally and discuss with him some of his minor affairs. The more he saw of Arthur the better he liked him. Incidentally, also, it may be said that the more ability he found in the young man, the higher arose his opinion of Mary.

Simon Brent's man of affairs—the head of his financial department, so to speak—was Franklin Morris. He was a type that one invariably meets around big financial concerns in one position or another; and not only was he a type, but a perfect type. Having been brought up on the Street, he knew all its sharp practices and was a valuable assistant to one of Simon's disposition.

But Simon never took Morris into his deepest confidence.

Despite this, however, Morris managed to know a great deal more of Simon's affairs than that astute financier imagined. Thus he was able to make himself appear far more important than his position really warranted.

When Simon began his investigation of Arthur Durham's ability—for that is what his interest in the young man amounted to—Morris became jealous. Not knowing Simon's motive, and seeing Durham so frequently about the office he began to fear he was to be displaced. Gradually his jealousy developed into a positive hatred for the young man.

Durham was perfectly ignorant of Morris's feelings. Had he known them, it would have been a matter of total indifference—for Durham was one of those young men who had the metropolitan idea of self-reliance strongly

developed.

All of which has no particular bearing upon this particular period, but will save much explanation later on.

CHAPTER V

I T WAS near the beginning of Mary's second year in New York that Simon Brent sat at his desk one morning busily writing. Having finished, his right hand mechanically thrust the pen through the scanty gray hair above his ear, while his left slowly raised from his desk the document to which he had just affixed his signature. With both hands he held paper out at arms length under the electric light and carefully perused its contents.

Several times during this perusal he leaned back in his

chair, closed his eyes and pondered deeply:

Almost at his elbow, where he could scan the tape without raising his eyes from his desk, the ticker pounded out its ceaseless staccato as it recorded the fluctuations of the markets.

In the offices on both sides, private wires conveyed to his brokers buying and selling orders in the markets of the whole world.

In offices still further removed from his sanctum, an array of stenographers and clerks reported and recorded the deals and the profits.

In the street below, on 'Change, and in the financial institutions at home and abroad, eager eyes and eager ears awaited the news of every move made in these offices; but unmindful of all this stress and strain—unmindful of the thousands who hung upon his slightest word—Simon Brent sat silently pondering what was to be his last earthly mandate.

"Yes," he finally mused aloud as he pursed up his thin lips and pushed an electric button on his desk, "I'm sure it's the right thing. Matthew will see that everything is done as it should be."

In answer to the bell, Billy hastily entered from an adjoining room.

"Tell Prichard to come here!" Simon commanded.

Billy turned as on a pivot and disappeared through the still open door, while Simon carefully placed three seals on the document he had just signed.

He had hardly finished when Billy returned, followed

by Prichard.

"Did you send for me, sir?" asked the latter.

Simon nodded and raised his eyes from the desk just in time to see Billy again pivoting for the door.

"Here, Billy," he called, "I want you, too."

The pivoting became a full turn as the youth brought himself up beside Prichard in front of Simon's desk.

"I want you to witness this document," said Simon.

"It's my will."

"Your will, sir?" from Prichard in surprise. Oughtn't you to have a lawyer?"

Simon looked savagely at his clerk.

"Don't you think I know what I want better than any

lawyer can tell me?"

"Oh, yes, sir," Prichard hastened to reply; "but wills are such uncertain things, sir; and—and—if you'll pardon my saying it, sir, when yours goes into effect, you won't be here to attend to it."

Simon smiled grimly.

"No, Prichard, I won't; but a better man will."

Then, noting a startled expression upon Prichard's face, he added in a more confidential tone:

"Don't think I haven't had a lawyer—the best I can em-

ploy-and believe me, there are no flaws in it."

He pushed the document toward the aged clerk.

"Sign there!"

His hand trembling with emotion, Prichard affixed his

signature.

"To think," he exclaimed as he slowly straightened up, "to think that I should be called upon to witness a document that disposes of a billion—"

"Prichard!" snapped Simon sharply; and Prichard promptly collapsed as Simon motioned Billy to a chair.

"Put your name there!" he commanded, "and when the time comes, don't forget that you wrote it, how you wrote it and when you wrote it."

The smartness of Billy's face gave way to one of earnestness as he slowly wrote his name. Then as he surveyed his signature he said:

"You're on the right side of the market when you put

your money on me, Mr. Brent."

"Was that all, sir?" asked Prichard deferentially as Simon drew the paper carefully to him and blotted the signatures.

"Yes!" curtly.

As the two withdrew, Simon picked up the document and again read it through carefully. Then he placed it in an envelope, sealed it and superscribed it with his lawyer's name.

Setting the sealed envelope against the inkstand, Simon leaned back in his chair with his hands on the arms.

"Yes," he muttered, "Matthew will see that things are done as they should be. He'll divide it much better than I can."

He nodded his head vigorously several times.

A couple of minutes later he arose from his chair and crossed the room to the bookcase. Taking one of the volumes therefrom, he opened it and began to read. Several times some one appeared in the doorway leading to

the outer offices, but seeing him standing there thus occupied, none dared to disturb him.

If he saw them he paid no heed.

It might have been fifteen minutes later that the door

from the outer hall opened and Mary entered.

What a different Mary from the one who had landed from the private car at the Grand Central station only sixteen months before! No longer the flounces her grandmother wore, but the close-fitting tailor-made. No longer the Shaker bonnet, but a jaunty hat that added to the intelligence and beauty of her face.

She was all that could be desired.

From the Gotham viewpoint, at least, Mrs. Durham had well earned the forty thousand dollars which Simon Brent had placed to her credit the day that Mary had become to him a living reality.

From just a moment after entering the room Mary

stopped in astonishment at what she saw.

Then a smile overspread her face, and taking a couple of quick steps with a movement so graceful that it accentuated her slender shapeliness, she exclaimed with a laugh:

"Why, Uncle Simon, reading fiction during office

hours!"

With an exclamation of pleased surprise the old man slowly raised his eyes from the book as he replied: "No, my dear; not fiction, but character."

A puzzled expression spread itself over the girl's face.

"Character?" she queried. "Aren't you reading one

of Daddy's books?"

She took a step nearer and looked up into his face—a face upon which years of money-making had left deep lines, although for the time being they were softened by the expression of affection with which he regarded his fair visitor.

"Yes, child," he replied, "it is one of your grandfather's

books; but I am not reading it for the story. I am reading it to have a talk with Matthew—my brother Matthew whom I have not seen for fifty years."

"I see," laughed the girl. "Daddy's heroes all talk just

like Daddy."

"Yes, Mary, and his heroines just like you."

"Do you think so?" and her face flushed with pleasure.

"Don't you know it?"

"I hadn't thought of it, Uncle Simon; but perhaps they do."

"They do." Then suddenly: "I should like to take Matthew by the hand and thank him for sending you to me—to a lonely old man without a friend—cut off from the world and imprisoned by the very wealth he used so much to crave."

The girl started forward impulsively and laid both

hands upon his arm.

"Oh, Uncle Simon!" she exclaimed, "won't you leave it all for a time and come down to Tonga and visit Daddy? He would love so to see you!"

The expression on Simon's face changed from one of

sadness to one half gay as he patted her fair cheek.

"Do you really thing that Matthew would care to see me? You know we parted in anger."

"What, Daddy angry! Uncle Simon, you must be mis-

taken."

Simon's brows contracted as though he would make a stern reply; but the frown quickly cleared under the girl's steadfast gaze.

"At least we thought we were angry," he finally said.

"But you're not angry now—either of you?"

"I can only speak for myself, and to prove that I am not angry I have arranged a surprise for Matthew. I have bought Commodore Allin's steam yacht, Arethusa. Next Monday we shall start for a six months' cruise around the world, with the Island of Tonga as our chief port."

"Uncle Simon, do you really mean it?"

The girl's cheeks flushed and her eyes sparkled as she

impetuously clasped both hands about his arm.

For a moment Simon made no reply, as with softening eyes he contemplated Mary's happy face. Then, as the ghost of a smile appeared around the corners of his mouth, he exclaimed with a voice full of affection—a rejuvenated voice, which he scarcely recognized as his own!

"Yes, I really mean it, Mary. I'm going to take a six month's holiday and bring Matthew back. The idea of anyone burying himself in the South Sea Islands for fifty years is preposterous. We'll bring him back with us, that's what we'll do."

Mary shook her head gravely, while into her eyes came an expression which clearly betokened her kinship to the man at her side.

"I am afraid you don't know Daddy yet," she said. Simon smiled almost broadly as he returned the book

he had been reading to its place in the case.

"You mean you think he won't come?"

"I am afraid not."

"Then I know him better than you do, Mary. The man who could write that twelve inches of books," and Simon indicated the half dozen volumes on the shelf before him, "would never refuse to do anything that would help lift some one out of the slough of despair—even though that someone was his old fool brother."

"Why, Uncle Simon, you know that the name doesn't fit-"

"It fits me like an old shoe," he interrupted.

Then as Mary was about to reply he continued: "Where can you find a greater fool than the man who has spent sixty odd years in forging a chain, every link

of which binds him tighter and tighter to a whirling millstone, that will eventually crush out his life? Where can you find a bigger fool than the man, who, for more than seventy years, has been imprisoning himself in a cell, every bar of which has cut him off more and more from human love and friendship? Yes, has even caused him to forget that such things as love and friendship exist!"

"But you haven't done that, Uncle Simon," declared the girl firmly. "Just see how easily you opened the door

of the cell to me when I came."

The old man placed a hand tenderly on each of the

girl's shoulders and looked earnestly into her face.

"You mean," he finally said, "how easily you opened the door and admitted yourself." Then after a pause: "Do you know, child, you are the only human being I have ever loved?"

"What! Not Daddy?" and Mary almost instinctively

drew away.

"Not until you came. I had read his books—first from curiosity, then from admiration and lastly from real pleasure—but it was not until he sent you to me and I began to see his soul shining through you, that I came to love him as a brother should. That is why I am going to bring him back."

"But suppose he won't come—suppose he doesn't even

wish me to come?"

Simon's face grew pale and his hands clutched the girl's shoulder convulsively; but he uttered no word.

"You know," she continued. "I have been here more

than a year now."

"You wouldn't stay there?" he finally managed to ask. "You wouldn't bury yourself away down among those savages?"

"Daddy is there!" she said softly. "It is home!"

Silently he gazed into her upturned eyes, through which

the purity, gentleness and trustfulness of her nature were revealed.

"Yes," she repeated with a smile, "it is home, and it is so beautiful with its birds and its flowers, the sea and the sky and—and Daddy."

"But you will come back! You will come back!" he

pleaded.

Her reply was prevented by the hurried entrance of Arthur Durham.

Mary turned her head at the sound of the opening door. As she recognized the newcomer, Simon felt her start beneath his hand and caught a look in her face as she acknowledged the young man's greetings, which sent a thrill of joy through his aged frame. Then, as he advanced to meet Arthur, he smiled inwardly and muttered under his breath: "She'll come back all right."

Aloud he said in his usual abrupt and curt manner:

"Good morning, Durham, how's the deal?"

"Blocked!" and the young man shrugged his shoulders. Simon stopped as he was about to seat himself at his desk.

"Blocked?" he queried sharply. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that the Dessicated has been ahead of us."

"The Dessicated?" exclaimed Simon angrily. "You mean Gilson Gage?"

"Well, yes, I supose so."

Simon eyed the young man narrowly for a moment and started to speak. Remembering Mary he checked himself and addressed her instead:

"Was there anything you especially wanted this morning?" he asked in a changed voice.

An odd little smile spread itself over Mary's face.

"You said if I would come down to the office you had something for me."

"O, yes, I'd forgotten."

He pushed the button on his desk and hastily made a cabalistic mark on a card, which he handed to his niece.

"If you will give that to the cashier as you go out," he said, "he will give you five hundred dollars—if that is enough?" he added hastily.

Mary's face grew pink.

"Many times too much," she laughed. "Mr. Durham will think I am a very extravagant girl."

"I'll inform him to the contrary," was the smiling reply.

Then to the boy who answered the bell:

"Billy, show Miss Brent out through the cashier's office and ask Mr. Morris to come here."

Mary turned in the doorway and waved a smiling farewell.

"I'll be back to take you to luncheon, Uncle!" and she blew him a kiss from the tips of her fingers and disappeared.

For just a moment a tender smile lingered on the old man's lips. As it faded he turned to Durham with his

usual crafty expression:

"Now then," he snapped, "about the Dessicated. What

have they done?"

"Secured an option on the property and doubled the price," was Durham's reply. "They must have heard you were after it and thought it a good chance to make a dollar."

"How could they have heard it? No one knew it but you."

Durham's face flushed and then grew pale as he drew himself up proudly.

"Your insinuation is unjust, sir," he said, with a determined air, "and you ought to know it—if you don't?"

For several moments the old man scrutinized Durham through half closed eyelids, in the meantime tapping his desk nervously with the tip of his middle finger.

"Yes, I do know it," he finally said: "but it's a strange thing that for the past two years Gilson Gage has been able to anticipate enough of my intentions to have squeezed out of me a good sized fortune."

Then after a moment's pause he continued: "But I

shall find out some day and then-"

Whatever he might have intended to say was interrupted by the entrance of Morris, who, with his closely chopped iron gray moustache and clean-cut features, little indicated the warped thoughts which had of late possessed him. In his hand he carried a small memorandum book.

"How much Dessicating Company stock have we on hand?" growled Simon as soon as he observed him.

Morris consulted his memorandum book.

"One hundred and twelve thousand shares."

Simon glanced at the tape as it slowly fell from the ticker into the basket.

"I see it's offered at 1.10 and no sales. How did we happen to get such a load?"

"We bought it at par. It looks good."

Simon again drummed on the desk with his finger. Then he took from his vest pocket a small memorandum book and ran his fingers down the pages.

"My memorandum shows that I have loaned the Dessicated a hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars on call."

"Yes, sir."

For another second or two he tapped the desk with his finger and then wheeling suddenly in his chair exclaimed:

"Call in the loan and offer to sell fifty thousand shares of Dessicated in lots of five hundred at ninety-eight cents."

Morris started in surprise.

"But, Mr. Brent," he exclaimed, "we have more money on hand now than we can loan and—"

Simon leaned forward and regarded Morris with the utmost surprise.

"And what?" he snapped.

"Such action would cripple the Dessicated. It might even break them. We don't want to do that."

Simon's face became livid.

"We?" he almost shouted. "We, did you say?" How long have you been my partner?"

"Why-er-why I-er I-er," stammered Morris, taken en-

tirely off his guard by this unexpected outburst.

"And how do you know," continued Simon without giving him an opportunity to speak, "that I have more money on hand than I can use? Since when have you taken to questioning my orders? Do as I tell you unless—unless—"

He paused, while an expression indicative of sudden thought came into his eyes.

Slowly he arose from his chair and advanced towards

the now utterly confounded and confused Morris.

"Unless," he continued, "you are playing into the

hands of Gilson Gage."

Morris's face blanched and such an expression of guilt spread itself over his countenance that words were un-

necessary.

"That's it! That's it;" shouted Simon, "why didn't I think of it before? Why didn't I see it? You've been playing me false! You've been playing into the hands of my enemies! That's how they learned of my plans—that's—"

"But, Mr. Brent," began Morris.

"Don't speak to me! Don't speak to me!" shrieked Simon. "Get out of my sight! I'll break him, that's what I'll do! I'll ruin him! I should have done it long ago! Prichard! Prichard!" he called. "Here—"

He took a couple of steps toward the other office,

stopped, threw both hands to the back of his head and fell forward to the floor.

Durham, who had remained too utterly dumbfounded to speak, sprang to his assistance.

"Summon a physician at once!" he commanded as he tore open Simon's collar. "It's the least you can do."

Morris started as though to obey and then stopping, turned swiftly.

"Durham," he fairly hissed, "if you ever repeat a word of what has just passed I'll—"

Durham's head came up with a jerk.

"Cut out the threats," he interrupted impatiently, "and get a doctor at once. You can attend to me later."

CHAPTER VI

SIMON Brent's sudden collapse was a great blow to those of his immediate domestic and business household and to the financial world. Especially was it so to Mary, who was thus left completely alone, thousands of miles from home.

During the three days that Simon lingered the girl spent practically every moment at his bedside. For hours at a time she held his hand, while he gazed at her mutely as though devouring her every feature. At other times he would make an effort to speak; but all that ever could be understood were the words:

"Matthew can do it! Matthew can do it!"

In the business world his death caused acute financial conditions and a flurry in the market, which, for the moment, threatened most serious consequences.

It is to the credit of Franklin Morris that the condition did not become worse. Durham, appreciating his

efforts, held his peace.

During those days Morris acted wisely and well. For nearly a week he was the central figure on the Street.

Then Simon's will was opened.

With its reading and publication, Morris became once more a satellite and Mary and her grandfather the central luminaries.

By the terms of Simon's will, Mary was made his sole heir and Matthew sole executor. In a preliminary clause, Simon explained the purpose of his action in the following words:

"Although I have accumulated some wealth, my life has been a failure. Therefore, I do not consider myself qualified to divide my estate, beyond naming my grandniece, Mary Brent, my sole residuary legatee. I hereby appoint my brother, Matthew Brent, of Tonga, an Island in the South Sea, my sole executor, with authority to divide my estate as he may see fit,—although the wishes of my niece shall never be disregarded. So well do I know my brother, although I have not seen him for fifty years, that I feel he will divide and administer my estate with justice to all, and will honestly execute my will."

It is not necessary to know New York intimately to realize the commotion the will caused. It is only necessary to be familiar with the New York newspapers.

Being unable to reach Matthew, the newspaper men turned their attention to Mary for information concerning him. She could only describe him as he appeared

to her-a grand and noble man.

Realizing that Mary's opinion might be more or less prejudiced, the newspaper men turned their attention to Matthew's books. Six or seven of them had been published during the past forty years, without attracting an especial attention. They formed the only connecting link between Matthew Brent and the world outside of Tonga. They were written in his leisure hours and forwarded from time to time to a firm of publishers, once prominent, but now little known. They had been published quite largely through friendship of long ago.

From these writings some deduced that Matthew was a socialist; others that he was a fanatic, others that he was a dreamer; while still others professed to find his books

the acme of Christian idealism.

So varied were the opinions and so great the demand created by the discussions, that his publishers were taxed to their utmost. As for Matthew, himself, like Jonah's gourd, he sprang in a night from a practically unknown author to the pinnacle of prominence—if not popularity.

The books were all works of fiction, written for the purpose of exploiting Matthew's belief that the world was a place in which the Creator intended mankind to manifest more and more the spirit of brotherly love, and not a place in which to develop and manifest ambition, greed, pride and hatred in that ceaseless pursuit of wealth and power which has come to be termed business.

"That business," he wrote, "is most successful, in which the profits can be computed in kind deeds and loving

thoughts rather than in dollars and cents."

These ideas seemed so impracticable and had become so obsolete in New York, that little wonder was expressed that brothers holding such opposite views of life as Simon and Matthew Brent should have quarreled. The only wonder was that Simon should have designated such an idealist to perform so practical and gigantic a work as the division and settlement of his vast estate.

Nearly every writer of prominence undertook to analyze Simon's statement in his will, that he had been a

failure.

Some held that he must have considered himself a failure, because he had not attained to the full eminence of his financial desires.

Others decided that he considered himself a failure because he had been unable to gain prominence in more

than one line of human endeavor.

Others declared that it was because he had been unable to obtain the confidence of his fellowmen. Others saw in his last declaration an utter failure to obtain happiness.

During all the gossip and comment, the most interesting speculation was concerning Matthew's ability, after fifty years absence from the world, to handle the great financial problems of the estate. Particularly and personally were the newspaper men interested in knowing what would become of the *Planet*, the great Metropolitan daily which was one of the active properties belonging to the Brent estate.

"I have heard my grandfather say," Mary told one of the reporters, "that he used to be a reporter on the *Trib*une many years ago. I have heard him say he considered

Horace Greeley the greatest man he ever knew."

This information furnished the suggestion for a good story; but the clue failed. It was impossible to find a single man among the old newspaper workers who had the

slightest remembrance of Matthew.

One old printer did profess to remember something about him and declared that Matthew was the man who once obtained a raise in salary, by presenting to the business manager a letter of dismissal given him by Greeley. Being unable to read Greeley's writing, no one could dispute the man when he claimed it was an order for a raise.

While all this was agitating the public, Mrs. Durham took Mary completely in charge, while Arthur was

courtesy and kindness personified.

Arthur Durham was a young man who believed that deeds, more than words, express the desires and intents of the heart. Instead, therefore, of protesting his love for the girl, he did his best to look after her affairs and safe-

guard her interests.

For several days after Simon's death, Durham had considered the wisdom of telling her of the last interview between her uncle and Morris. Realizing, however, that no good could come of it, and that for the present Morris was a necessity, he held his peace; but he impressed upon Mary the great importance of bringing her grandfather to New York at the earliest possible moment.

"How are we to get him here?" she asked.

"Cable him via Samoa, or some place which is near enough to have a vessel sent after him. Never mind the expense."

Mary shook her head. "He wouldn't come!" she

declared.

"Wouldn't come?" exclaimed Arthur in amazement. "Why not?"

"He wouldn't see any need of it."

"Then what are we to do?"

Again Mary shook her head. It was altogether too

big a problem for her.

For two weeks Durham cudgeled his brain. He was thinking of nothing but Mary and how she should be protected. He knew he loved her. He wondered if she loved him.

As he pondered thus, an idea came to him which he considered in the light of an inspiration. Trembling with alternate hope and fear he hastened to communicate it to her.

"Why can't we go down and bring your grandfather back to New York just as Uncle Simon had planned?" he suggested. "The Arethusa is ready, and it is the quickest way I can think of."

The suggestion met Mary's instant approval.

"Can we really do it?" she asked. "Can we go and

get Daddy all by ourselves?"

"There is absolutely no reason why not," he replied in the most matter-of-fact manner. "We can be married tomorrow morning and leave for Tonga tomorrow afternoon on our wedding trip."

Mary fairly gasped with surprise. "Our wedding trip?

Why, Arthur! You've never even proposed."

"Well, I'm doing it now," he said. "It may not be the regular way, but it's my way. I'd have proposed long ago, but I didn't know how Mr. Brent would take it.

Since he's left you all this wealth, I've been afraid you might think I was just after the money and so I haven't dared to say anything. Now something has got to be done. What do you say?"

He drew close to her and regarded her tenderly. "You

know I love you," he added, as she hesitated to reply.

"Do you, really?" she asked under her breath, and the happiness of her life hung on his answer. "Do you really love me, Arthur?"

For just a moment he hesitated—the question seemed so absurd.

"Do I really?" he finally managed to articulate as he seized both her hands. "Is it possible after one look at yourself in the mirror, that you should doubt that any one could help loving you?"

"I don't want to be loved just for my face," she declared emphatically, "I want to be loved for my real self."

Durham's face expressed the most unbounded surprise. "Your real self?" he ejaculated. "Well, isn't it your real self I'm talking about?"

"Of course not. I can't see my real self in the mirror."

"Of course not," he admitted a bit crestfallen. Then suddenly: "But I can see your real self in your eyes, your smile, your every word and look, and I know I love you. And—and—," he stammered as he held her at arms length and regarded her earnestly, "and you love me! Now don't you?"

She could deny no longer. For reply she hid her face on his shoulder, while he softly kissed her shining hair.

"And you'll marry me in the morning?" he queried.

"Isn't there some other way?" she faintly asked, looking up at him shyly. "I—I couldn't marry anybody without Daddy's consent."

Durham paused and scratched his head reflectively. "I hadn't thought of Daddy," he finally said. "I'd only

been thinking of Uncle Simon." Then after a longer pause: "But how are we to get Daddy's consent until we see him? It doesn't look exactly proper to take so long a trip without first being married."

"Perhaps your mother might think of a way. She

always seems to know the right thing to do."

For want of a better suggestion the matter was referred to Mrs. Durham.

"Why, my dear," she exclaimed taking the girl in her arms with more warmth than she had ever expressed toward any human being except her son, "the solution of your problem is easy. I'll go along."

"What?" exclaimed Durham in the utmost surprise. You'll go along? You'll go to the cannibal islands?"

"Why not?"

"It will take more than three months."

"The longer the better!" declared Mrs. Durham. "I really need to get away from New York after all this excitement. I've had a strenuous time," and then to herself she added; "it will give my income time to catch up with my expenses."

Three day's later, without telling any one except Simon's attorney, Judge Everett, they left New York

upon their uncertain mission.

"For it is uncertain," Mary declared, "and we shall have to be very wise or we shall fail. You don't know Daddy."

CHAPTER VII

IT IS the other side of the world. The sun, which has just risen out of the Pacific, sheds its rays over a scene of tropical splendor and beauty. It is Matthew Brent's home on the Isle of Tonga.

To one unfamiliar with such scenery, nothing could be more entrancing than this bit of landscape in the middle of the South Sea. It is typically tropical; but just enough of the Northland has been introduced into the picture to make it a fit home for one whose early training had been among civilized people. Aside from this artificial bit, however, everything partakes of South Sea savagery.

The house is little more than a bamboo hut, except for the broad porches which surround it and give it the appearance of an East Indian bungalow. From these porches glimpses of the glistening waters of the Pacific may be caught through the luxuriant foliage. The air is full of the music of song-birds and the scent of flowers—not tropical flowers, bereft of perfume—but English roses, which have been transplanted into this alien, but gracious climate.

Seen through the trees, out on the waters of the little bay which form the Island harbor, a steam yacht rides at anchor—a yacht of such ample proportions as to partake almost of the character of an ocean liner. So unusual is its appearance that it has attracted to the shore not only the owner of the bungalow, but a goodly

portion of the population as well-leaving the residence

in the charge of a man-servant.

That this servant would, likewise, rather be at the shore than engaged in his present occupation, is evidenced by the frequent glances he casts as he arranges the breakfast table on the broad veranda. In fact, so absorbed is he in the yacht that he is totally unaware of the approach of another native—who carries upon his head a large basket of fruit—until the latter sets the basket upon the porch remarking:

"For the good father, Tippo-Tib."

The servant thus addressed turned at the sound of the speaker's voice and bent over the basket with pleasure.

"Tunas," he exclaimed as he picked up a fine specimen from the basket; "and plums, too; the first of the season.

Oh, but the father will be pleased!"

"Do you think so, Tippo-Tib? Then Alfa is glad." He motioned to another native who stood in the distance with a basket of flowers in his hand. "But where is the father?"

"Down by the water, waiting for Her."

"Waiting for Her?" exclaimed the native jumping up and down and dropping the fruit which he had begun to remove from the basket. "Is Her coming in that boat?"

Tippo-Tib nodded his head, at which the native became even more excited, jumping up on the porch and looking

off toward the water.

"Hi! Hi!" he called out in a shrill voice. "I can see the little puff, puff, and the people in it."

The announcement was received with much excitement.

"Where has Her been, Tippo-Tib?" queried Alfa.

"To the great foreign city beyond the water."

"Has Her come back to stay?"

"We hope so."

Alfa drew a deep sigh. "Her has been gone a long

time," he said, "and the good father has missed her much." His face brightened, "Now that Her has come home, the good father will laugh, will he not, Tippo-Tib?"

"Yes, yes," was the reply. "And we must hurry to

have the breakfast ready."

Tippo-Tib hastened into the house, but returned almost immediately as a great shout was heard from the shore.

"The people all see her!" he exclaimed as he jumped onto a chair. "Yes," and he picked up an old-fashioned telescope which lay on the table and put it to his eye, "and Tippo-Tib sees her, too."

The information was more than the other Islanders could bear and they rushed off in great haste so as to be

on the beach when the little party should land.

If there had been excitement at the bungalow, it was a hundred times greater on the shore—for there were a hundred times as many to cause it.

Chief among them was Matthew Brent himself.

Bareheaded, Matthew stood at the end of a little pier, slowly waving his hat as the launch approached. Clad in white, with his long white hair and beard blowing in the wind, he was, indeed, a remarkable figure; and so thought Durham, as from the launch, he inspected him with his marine glasses.

News of the arrival of the Arethusa and the identity of those on board had been brought to Matthew at daylight by a native, who had discovered the yacht in the first gray dawn and had swum out to it—or at least near enough to catch a glimpse of Mary pacing back and

forth on deck.

She had been up since midnight awaiting the first sight of Tonga.

No sooner had the native recognized her than he had

hurried back to shore with the information.

Then, for the first time in forty-five years, Matthew

Brent lost his self-possession. He shouted for Tippo-Tib and aroused the entire village. Hastily dressing himself, he hurried to the water's edge, followed by practically the whole population.

Mary espied him just as soon as he made his appearance and could hardly wait until the launch was lowered.

"There's Daddy! There's Daddy!" she exclaimed as Arthur and Mrs. Durham joined her on deck. "Let me get a good look at him."

She took the glasses from Durham's hands and gazed long and earnestly. "Oh, isn't he grand!" she cried.

Arthur reached for the glasses. "I'll tell you better after I get a good look at him," he laughed. Then after a pause: "He doesn't look much like Uncle Simon."

"No, indeed," laughed Mary. "But he acts like him." "Only different," suggested Durham. "He looks rather severe."

Mary drew a long breath. "I believe he is," she admitted after a moment, "I'd forgotten it until I saw him. I—I don't think I'll tell him about you until he gets acquainted with you."

"About me? What do you mean?"
"Why—why, about our engagement."

Again Durham inspected Matthew through the glasses. "I think that would be a good idea," he finally ac-

quiesed, "Don't you, mother?"

"Don't ask me," replied Mrs. Durham sharply. "I have learned since we started on this voyage not to give advice to any one."

In explanation of which remark it may be stated that Mrs. Durham had in the beginning attempted to manage the ship and all aboard, and had not succeeded.

As the launch neared the shore, it met a number of the natives swimming out. As it drew still nearer the occupants could see more distinctly the crowd on the beach.

"It looks as though the entire population had turned

out to meet you," said Durham to Mary.

"What would you expect?" she laughed. "Ila-Ila and I are the greatest attraction that could be offered, aren't we, Ila-Ila?"

Before she could reply the launch glided up beside the frail wooden pier. Without waiting for it to be made fast, Mary sprang ashore and threw her arms about her grandfather's neck.

"Daddy!" she cried as she rushed into his out-

stretched arms. "How good it is to see you."

"Not as good as it is to see you," declared Matthew as he pressed the girl closely to his breast. "It seemed as though you would never return," and there was a note of pathos in his voice.

For several moments the pair stood thus, completely absorbed in each other. Then, as Matthew noted that the others had landed, he assumed a more dignified air.

"To whom am I indebted for your homecoming?" he

asked.

"To these dear friends," laughing joyously and turning to Durham and his mother. "I had almost forgotten them in my selfish pleasure. This is Captain Durham of the Arethusa, and this," indicating Mrs. Durham, "is his mother. They have both been so kind to me."

"The kindness is all on your granddaughter's side," declared Durham quickly. "It has been a great pleasure

to serve her, I can assure you."

Matthew bowed gravely with old-time courtesy.

"I am under great obligations to you, Captain Durham; and to you, also, Madam, for bringing my granddaughter home. Permit me to extend to you the hospitality of my humble home while you remain in port."

Then turning to the gaping natives, he cried: "Away

with you. Tell Tippo-Tib we are coming."

The natives fairly fell over one another in their eagerness to obey, and scampered away as fast as their legs would carry them. The others followed more slowly.

Appreciating that Mary and her grandfather would doubtless like to be alone, Durham lingered behind on a pretense of looking after the launch. Mrs. Durham followed Ila-Ila who walked rapidly in advance.

After greeting Tippo-Tib, Ila-Ila led Mrs. Durham still further toward the village, telling Tippo-Tib that

they would return shortly.

As Mary and Matthew came in sight of the house and its little garden, Mary stopped and impulsively exclaimed: "Oh, Daddy, isn't it beautiful!"

"Yes," replied her grandfather with a slight twinkle

in his eye, "for the first time in twenty months."

"Twenty months?" queried Mary in surprise.

"Yes, it is exactly twenty months since you went away."

"Daddy, you don't mean it! Is it as long as that? It doesn't seem so."

"Not to you; but it seems twice as long to me. All the forty odd years I have lived here did not seem one half as long as the shortest day you were away." Then as he held her out at arms length and took a good look at her. "But it's all over now. You are back again, and it is paradise."

A step on the gravel caused him to turn as Durham

approached.

"Excuse me, Captain," he said, "but being a sailor you know how good it seems to see one's children after a

voyage."

Durham's face grew red as he replied in a confused manner—a manner made more confusing by Mary's laughter. "Oh, yes! oh, yes! I know all about it!" but as he turned toward the house he shook his finger at Mary as much as to say; "Wait until I get you alone."

"Now for breakfast!" exclaimed Matthew as the trio ascended the porch. "Why, where is your mother, Captain?" as he noted for the first time the absence of Mrs. Durham.

"I am sure I don't know."

"She has gone to the village with Ila-Ila," explained Tippo-Tib. "She said not to wait."

"That's too bad," said Matthew. "Her cocoa will get

cold."

"Oh, she won't mind that!" declared Durham apologetically. "I think she prefers it cold. At any rate I am sure she wouldn't wish us to wait. She may be here any moment."

"Yes," declared Mary, as she patted the servant on the shoulder, "and I know Tippo-Tib has plenty of hot cocoa in the kitchen."

Tippo-Tib's face beamed with joy, and without more words they took their places at the table—Matthew waving Durham to a seat with stately courtesy, while the natives peeped around the corner of the porch in joyous excitement.

"This is not quite as elegant as your stately ship,

Captain," began Matthew, "but-"

"But a thousand times more beautiful!" interrupted Mary.

Durham looked at her admiringly. "It seems like

heaven to me," he said.

"If heaven is a place where all is harmony," said Matthew not catching the drift of Durham's remarks, "this cannot be so very far from heaven," adding as he made an attack upon the appetizing dish which Tippo-Tib had just set before him: "Not much like New York, Captain?"

"Well, hardly," replied Durham, "New York seems a

bit nearer the other place."

"That isn't exactly what I meant," replied Matthew with a laugh. "I meant in appearance. I suppose you

are well acquainted in New York?"

"Acquainted?" exclaimed Durham impetuously. "Well, I should say so. I was born there. Lived there all my life." Then as he caught a surprised look on Matthew's face he continued with some confusion: "I mean when I am not at sea. Of course when I am at sea—when I am at sea—why I am at sea—you see!"

"Oh, yes, I see," replied Matthew not noticing the young

man's embarrassment.

"Which is more than the Captain does I am afraid,"

said Mary suppressing her laughter.

For some moments there was silence, while Durham savagely attacked his breakfast and gathered his wits about him. At length he remarked in a casual manner:

"Of course you remember New York, Mr. Brent?"

"Oh, yes, I worked on the Tribune fifty years ago—" pronouncing it as though it were spelled "Try" "—Horace Greeley's paper, you know. Great man, Greeley. Ever meet him?"

"Why, Daddy!" exclaimed Mary. "Of course not. He

is too young."

Matthew leaned back in his chair and laughed silently.

"Of course, of course," he said. "Time slips away unnoticed on this side of the world. I heard that Greeley died some years after I left America."

"I believe so," replied Durham, "but it was before my

day. Let's see, he ran for president once, didn't he?"

"So I heard," replied Matthew. "Poor old man! They tell me it was his defeat that killed him. Few men can stand such disappointment," and he shook his head gravely.

"Still there are a few," laughed Durham. "We have

one who has grown fat on it. He doesn't mind."

"You don't tell me. Well! Well! things have changed!" Then suddenly, "I don't suppose I'd know New York."

"Oh, you can keep pretty close tab on it by the papers.

You get the papers, I suppose?"

"Not often, Captain. Once or twice a year; but that's often enough. I did try to keep up with the world the first five or six years after I came here; but I gradually lost interest in it. I rarely see a newspaper or magazine now."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Durham in amazement.

"What do you read?"

"Well," replied Matthew slowly, "I've cut my reading down to two books—Shakespeare and the Bible. They contain about all there is in life. The one is written from the material, the other from the spiritual viewpoint."

"But Daddy writes a great deal himself, you know,"

explained Mary.

"Then he'll like New York all right," declared Durham emphatically, as he glanced knowingly at Mary.

Matthew shook his head sadly.

"I never expect to see New York again; but I thought Mary should see something of the world. That is why I sent her to visit Simon. I knew she would like it."

"Oh, I loved it!" cried Mary. Then as she thought of the mission that brought her to Tonga: "But Daddy, you

will be so sorry that Uncle Simon-"

"Nothing that you can tell me about Simon will surprise me," interrupted her grandfather. "Naturally New York pleased you for you are young, while I am old:"

"Why, Daddy!"

"Only in years, Mary! Not in body. I feel as young as I did the day I landed on this Island forty-seven years ago."

Then as he lapsed into a reminiscent mood: "I shall never forget that day. There was just your father and

I, Mary. He was a tot of three and I was—well, never mind how old I was— but we were chums anyway. Yes, indeed, we were such chums."

"Just as you and I are, Daddy, and I am twenty and you are—why, Daddy," exclaimed Mary as she paused to think, "you are seventy-five and as active as many

New York men of fifty. Isn't he, Captain?"

"Sure," from Durham. Then noticing Matthew's reminiscent mood, he asked, more for the sake of something to say than because he did not know the story: "How did you come to leave New York, Mr. Brent?"

Matthew pushed his chair back from the table and

gazed for a few moments toward the broad Pacific.

"It is a long story, Captain," he finally said, "but quickly told. I was a newspaper man, a writer—newspaper men were writers in those days, you know."

"So I have heard."

"Yes, they were; and they knew a little of most everything. Well, I wrote a book. Oh, not much of a book at that; but it contained a good many things that seemed right to me.

"I never could understand," and the old gentleman became just a little emphatic, "why one half of the world should get rich off of the other half. Yet it does, so to

speak—and in this book I said so."

He looked at Durham as though expecting an opinion. "That sounds all right to me," was Durham's somewhat uncertain comment.

"Sounds right!" exclaimed Matthew straightening up in his chair, "Sounds right!" and he pounded on the table vigorously. "It is right; but Simon didn't agree with me."

"Why not?"

"Because he was getting rich off the other people."
Then his mood changed: "But that's passed now.

Naturally, however, the book caused some talk—almost any book will find some readers, you know, no matter how bad it is," and Matthew chuckled softly to himself.

"I am sure yours was very good, sir!" declared Dur-

ham graciously.

"It is," said Mary. "I have read it."

"What?" exclaimed Matthew in surprise. "You have read it? Where?"

"At Uncle Simon's. He's had all of your books. He said they were the best books he had ever read."

Matthew leaned over the table towards Mary and looked her earnestely in the face.

"Did Simon say that?" Mary nodded her head.

"You don't tell me! Well! Well! Well! It was over that book, Captain, that Simon and I quarreled. He said I was a dreamer and would die in the poorhouse. I told him he was a—you will excuse me, Captain, if I do not repeat what I told him. It would be unkind and I am sorry now that I said it." Then with a deep sigh: "Simon must have a heart after all."

"Indeed you are right, Daddy! And now to think you will never see him—"

"No, it is better that we should not meet," interrupted Matthew. "I never expect to go where he is and he will not come—"

"I am sure he is in a good place," declared Mary emphatically.

"For him, yes," replied Matthew positively; "but not

for me. But I am glad he has a heart!"

"I am sure of that," said Durham earnestly, "although I have heard people say that Simon Brent was a hard man. They are quite apt to say that about any man who has made a large fortune."

"I suppose so," assented Matthew. "Down here in

Tonga they have no occasion to criticise, for no one has a large fortune. That is as it should be. It makes this just the kind of a spot I told Simon New York should be."

"What?" exclaimed Durham. "New York like this? Excuse me!"

"Well, it should be," insisted Matthew, "and would be if men would stop fighting each other and do something for each other instead."

Durham nodded his head slowly.

"If they only would, Mr. Brent; but they won't!"

"That's just what Simon said. I replied that they must be taught to. He said it was impossible, and we parted in anger. Then I came here, where I have found the ideal life. There are no rich and so there are no poor. No one goes hungry and no one is so rich that he can live without working. There is no idle class, either from a lack of opportunity, or lack of incentive to work. We are one great family in which the elders are the mothers and fathers, and the younger are the sons and daughters."

Durham whistled softly under his breath. "You don't tell me," he said. Then aside to Mary: "Can you beat it?"

"It is just as I told Simon," Matthew rambled on. "There is no poverty because no one grows rich off of the industry of others. It is the ideal life," and he looked around at the scene with an expression of the most perfect tranquillity.

"It is beautiful, but it looks pretty tame to me," said Durham.

"Tame?" exclaimed the old man bending upon his companion a look akin to disgust. "Tame!" and he waved his hands toward the broad Pacific. "Tame, with all the birds, and the flowers and the sunshine! Tame, with the

melodious voices of nature ever ringing in your ears! Tame! Why it is the grand symphony of the universe, inspiring one as it did the prophets of old with the great mind in which is all the wisdom of the ages."

For several moments he remained buried in thought,

gazing out into his little world.

"I think you ought to tell him now!" suggested Durham to Mary in an undertone, having in mind the announcement of their engagement.

"Oh, I can't!" exclaimed Mary, thinking that Durham referred to her uncle's death. "You will have to."

"I would rather wait until I am better acquainted," declared Durham a bit sharply.

Mary's eyes grew sad. "Very well then, I know he must be told—I know it is my duty to tell him, although I know it will cause him great sorrow."

"Sorrow!" exclaimed Arthur under his breath. "How can it cause him sorrow?" and he looked at her increduously as she slowly rose to her feet and laid her hands on her grandfather's shoulders.

"What is it, child?" queried Matthew, turning at

Mary's touch.

"I have something to tell you, Daddy, which I fear will

make you very sad."

"That's a fine way to announce our engagement," thought Durham as he sprang to his feet. Aloud to Mary he said: "I think after all you had better let me tell your grandfather."

Matthew regarded them in a puzzled manner, but said nothing, as Durham began in a hesitating manner:

"I am sure your granddaughter is much mistaken. I think what she has to tell you will make you happy instead of sad. She—"

"Arthur!" interrupted Mary, "how can it make grand-father happy to hear that Uncle Simon is—"

"Uncle Simon?" exclaimed Durham in astonishment. Then in an undertone as he resumed his seat: "I thought you were trying to tell him about our engagement," and the young man hid his face in his cup.

The color came to Mary's face as she exclaimed hastily: "That is all you think about, Arthur. How can you be so thoughtless?" Then to her grandfather. "Daddy the Captain has made a mistake. It is-"

"He is not the only one who makes mistakes," interrupted Matthew smiling. "We all make them. The great thing is to be willing to rectify them-willing to do the right thing. The will to do right, you know, is the will of God. But," and he took Mary's hand, "what is the great secret?"

Summoning all her courage, Mary started to reply, but her words were drowned by screams uttered in a

woman's voice only a few feet away.

CHAPTER VIII

WHAT'S that!" exclaimed Durham as the scream was repeated. "It sounds like mother!" and he sprang from the porch followed by Mary.

"Some of the young women playing, I guess," re-

marked Matthew calmly.

"I am afraid something has happened!" insisted Durham as he and Mary stopped to listen.

"Nothing ever happens here," was Mary's reassuring

reply. "Don't be alarmed."

Again there was a scream, whereupon Tippo-Tib hastily rushed into the surrounding grove and quickly returned, followed by a party of natives, who held in their midst a struggling man clad in sailor's garb. After them came Mrs. Durham and Ila-Ila, the latter supported by several native women who were trying to staunch the blood which flowed from a wound in her arm.

Durham leaped quickly to his mother's side, while Mary assisted the women to place Ila-Ila on a rustic bench, where a green leaf was picked from the thick vegetation and bound about her arm.

"What is it, mother?" asked Durham in alarm.

"Everything! Everything!" was the hysterical reply. "That man tried to kill us."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Matthew sternly as he slowly descended from the porch. "No one does such things here."

Mrs. Durham turned upon him a look of anger and

scorn. "It is not impossible. Look at that poor girl!" pointing her finger to Ila-Ila.

"It must have been an accident," declared Matthew.

"Yes, yes, it was an accident," exclaimed the man with a strong Portuguese accent. "It was an accident. It was an accident, senhor."

"Wretch!" cried Mrs. Durham. "Don't you dare add

falsehood to your other crimes."

The man became quiet, but looked pleadingly at Matthew, who regarded him sternly.

"How did it happen, mother?" asked Durham.

"I can hardly tell. It was so unexpected. All I know is that we were walking down the pathway, when this man jumped from the thicket and tried to tear the brooch from my throat. Ila-Ila came to my rescue and he struck her with his knife."

"The cur!" exclaimed Durham springing toward the man. "I will strangle him."

"No, no, Arthur," seizing her son by the arm, "he might kill you."

"No violence, Captain!" commanded Matthew sternly.

"Two wrongs never make a right."

Pushing his mother aside, Durham made another dash for the man. Before he could reach him he was confronted by Tippo-Tib, who, raising his hand with a threatening gesture exclaimed: "Stop! Listen to the father!"

For a moment it seemed as though Durham would not obey; but his better judgment prevailed and he stood quietly, as Matthew said to the thoroughly frightened sailor:

"Stand forth!"

At this command the natives released their hold upon the captive.

He no sooner felt himself free than he started to run;

but before he could take three steps Matthew was upon him and forced him to his knees.

"You need not try to escape," he exclaimed. "It would be useless." Then as he lifted the sailor to his feet and released his hold: "What have you to say for yourself?"

"I was hungry."

"No one need go hungry in Tonga. You could have had plenty for the asking."

"I was afraid to ask. I have run away from the ship."

"Why have you run away from the ship?"

The man stood silent, evidently afraid to speak.

"Answer!" commanded Matthew. "Why have you run

away from the ship?"

"My brother, senhor!" exclaimed the man throwing himself at Matthew's feet. "My brother he was seek. He could not work. They mak' him work. He got seeker and seeker and pretty soon he die, and they throw him in the sea. I tell the mate he keel my brother! Yes—keel him! Then I mak' a stab at the mate with the knife. The mate he knock me down and tie me to the mast. He would have keeled me like my brother—but I run away."

"Because your brother died, is no reason why you should try to kill the mate. If he did wrong he will be

punished."

"No, no," replied the sailor springing to his feet in great excitement, "he will not be punished. There is no

one to punish him."

"Silence!" thundered Matthew. "Do you not know that no one can do wrong and escape punishment? Just as surely as the man who violates the law of mathematics suffers in working out his problem, just so surely must the man who violates the law of God—the law of love—suffer in working out the great problem of life. The punishment is fixed in both cases, just as the punishment is fixed in yours."

"No, no, senhor!" exclaimed the sailor again throwing himself at Matthew's feet, "I have been punished already."

Matthew looked sternly, but compassionately upon the prostrate seaman as he said in a voice of calm decision:

"The fear which at this moment possesses you is greater than any punishment man can inflict. Until restitution is made that fear will haunt you. I would not change your punishment if I could and I could not if I would."

Then turning to Tippo-Tib: "Feed him and let him

go."

During this most unusual scene, perfect silence had prevailed. Not a word had been spoken by any of the natives, while Mrs. Durham and her son had been too much amazed at the proceedings to offer any suggestions. Now that she saw the sentence imposed was about to be carried into effect without question on the part of Tippo-Tib and the others, Mrs. Durham exclaimed in an angry tone:

"Preposterous! See what he did to that poor girl. I will not permit him to be set free!"

Matthew turned upon her a cold and searching look,

but made no reply.

"Is that the only punishment you intend to inflict?" inquired Mrs. Durham stepping forward.

Regarding her gravely, Matthew asked: "Can you

conceive of a greater?"

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Durham, "and I demand-"

"Demand!" exclaimed Matthew interrupting her. "Demand? We recognize no demands here. We are satisfied to leave him to his own thoughts, knowing that through his suffering he will be chastened."

Then turning again to Tippo-Tib, he said calmly: "Do

as I bid. I am sure Ila-Ila is satisfied."

"Yes, indeed, Father," replied the girl rising to her feet

as the natives led the sailor away. "It is but a scratch and I am sure he will never do such a thing again." Then to Mrs. Durham: "If Madam will come inside I will give her some cocoa."

For just a moment Mrs. Durham stood silent, too much amazed by the proceedings to say anything. Then she broke into words:

"You are all crazy!" she cried. "All of you! And that old man—" pointing her finger at Matthew—"why Simon Brent was an angel compared to him. I won't stay here! I won't—"

"There, there, mother," said Durham soothingly, "don't take it so to heart."

"No, Mrs. Durham, don't let it disturb you," urged Mary coming to the rescue. "Please go in and have some breakfast." Then to Durham: "Captain, please take her in. I want to give Daddy Uncle Simon's message."

Without further words Mrs. Durham suffered her son to lead her into the house; but on the porch she could not refrain from looking back and expressing her disapproval at the entire proceeding by a contemptuous snort and shake of her head.

For several moments Matthew stood gazing after her with a thoughtful expression on his face. At length turning to Mary he asked:

"Who is that woman, Mary?"

"Why," in surprise, "that is Captain Durham's mother."

"Yes, I know, but that doesn't answer the question. There is something about her I don't like. She stirs me all up inside." Then suddenly: "I wonder if she's a widow?"

"Yes, sir, she is."

"That's it," ejaculated Matthew. "That's it. It's her widow ways. But because she ran over one man she can't

run over me. No, sir! No, sir!" and the old man shook

his head vigorously.

"There, there, Daddy," and Mary laid her head on his arm. "Don't get excited. Come and sit down. I have something I want to tell you—a message from Uncle Simon."

"A message from Simon?"

Slowly they crossed the little yard and Matthew seated himself upon one of the rustic benches, where he could gaze out upon the water.

"A message from Simon!" he repeated more to himself than to Mary. "A message from Simon! It is the first

message I have had from him since we parted."

"Yes," replied Mary as she sank down upon the grass at his feet. "It is the first time he ever had a messenger."

"Especially such a messenger," and the old man laid his hand tenderly upon Mary's head. "And was he glad to

see you—for my sake?"

"No one could have been more kind. Every request you made was granted, and he showed us everything there was to be seen—anywhere."

"My! My!" exclaimed Matthew in surprise. "I did'nt

know he could leave his business so long."

"Oh, he didn't go much himself," explained Mary quickly, but he gave me an automobile—"

"An automobile," interrupted Matthew, "and what's

an automobile?"

"Oh, I forgot," explained Mary, "that you don't know all about these things. An automobile is a horseless carriage."

Matthew looked at her in a puzzled manner.

"A carriage without horses? And will it go?"

"Oh, yes, Daddy, almost as fast as a railroad train."

Matthew slowly straightened himself up and looked at the girl gravely.

"Mary," he began, "You have always been a truthful girl. I have never known you to tell a lie; but don't tell me things like that and expect me to believe them."

"Daddy! Daddy! I am telling you the real truth. They are more common in the streets of New York than

horses."

Matthew slowly shook his head as he gazed out over the waters.

"If you say this is the truth, Mary," he finally said, "I shall have to believe you; but I don't understand it.

What makes them go?"

"Electricity and gasoline. Everything's electricity and gasoline now-a-days; but I can't explain it. Some day you will see them. Oh, yes, you will," she insisted as Matthew continued to shake his head. "Oh, yes, you will! And besides the automobile, Uncle Simon owned I don't know how many railroads! He gave us a special car to go anywhere we wished."

This information brought Matthew to his feet.

"A special car!" he exclaimed in his excitement. "Do you mean to say Simon Brent has a railroad and a special car all his own?"

"Yes, Daddy, he had," replied Mary again drawing him to his seat. "A special car and a special everything—everything that money could buy—railroads, mines, factories, a great newspaper, that beautiful yacht out yonder and—and—," Mary paused and her voice grew sad and full of tears, "and now, Daddy, they are all mine—the railroads, the banks, the factories, the yacht and I don't know what else. They are all mine."

Overcome by her emotion she buried her face on her

grandfather's knee and wept.

For several moments Matthew regarded her silently as he slowly stroked her golden head.

"Yours, child? Yours? What are you saying?"

Slowly the girl raised her eyes to his and looked earnestly into his face.

"Yes, Daddy, mine—and yours; for whatever is mine is

yours."

"But, Mary, I don't understand!"

For just a moment there was silence and then Mary said in a sweet voice:

"Daddy, Uncle Simon is dead."

Again there was silence, while down the old man's cheeks tears slowly found their way—the first tears he had shed in years.

"Dead!" he repeated under his breath. "Dead! Simon

dead!"

"Yes, Daddy, and he has left all of his great fortune to me."

If Matthew heard what she said he gave no intimation of it for several moments. Then, as the girl reached up and placed her hand on his shoulder, he repeated over to himself as he looked into her face:

"Dead! Simon dead! And he has left you all his great

wealth! Poor Simon! Poor Mary!"

"But I am not poor, Daddy!" exclaimed Mary putting both arms about his neck and laying her soft cheek against his face, "I am not poor. I still have you; and as long as I have you I am rich—richer than all Uncle Simon's money could make me."

Gradually the look of sadness faded from Matthew's face and, as he dried his tears with one hand, he patted

her shoulder with the other murmuring:

"There! There! Don't cry!"

"I can't help it, Daddy! Next to you I loved Uncle Simon. You don't know how he changed after I went to him. He was so sorry he had quarreled with you. All the stories you sent back he had beautifully bound and kept them in his private office. Finally he bought that beautiful

yacht out there and was coming to see you; but it was too late!" and the girl hid her face on her grandfather's knee.

Matthew slowly nodded his head several times, as was his wont when thinking deeply.

"So he has left his whole estate to you?"

"He didn't leave a thing to any one else," replied Mary impulsively, "Because—" and Mary paused thinking how best to broach the subject.

"Yes," said Matthew expectantly, "because-"

"Because," declared Mary, "he said you could divide it more justly than he."

Matthew started in the greatest surprise.

"What's that? I—I divide his estate! No, no, child, I am not fitted for any such work. I have been out of the

world too long."

"Nonsense!" declared Mary emphatically. "I can see that Uncle Simon was very wise in making you his sole executor. And because the estate must be settled within a year, I have come down to take you back to New York to help me carry out his wishes."

Again Matthew shook his head slowly but emphatically.

"Impossible!" he said. "I can't do it!"

"But you must, Daddy! You are wise enough to do anything. You wouldn't disappoint me after I have come half way around the world to take you back to New York."

Matthew regarded her quizzically. Then, as he surveyed his own attire he said with a whimsical laugh: "What would they think of me on Broadway in a rig like this?"

"There are worse looking rigs than that on Broadway every day," declared Mary, thinking of the many sights which had seemed most strange to her. "I am sure Uncle Simon knew—"

"Yes, Simon knew Broadway," interrupted Matthew, but how little he knew me."

"Daddy, he knew you well. He became acquainted with you through your books. He said they spoke to him just as you used to speak. He was so sorry he hadn't become better acquainted with you when you were young men together. His last message was: 'I am a failure. Matthew can do it!' and that is the message I bring you."

"A message from the dead!" muttered Matthew under

his breath. "And what a message."

He bowed his head upon his hands and wept silently. "There! There, Daddy!" said Mary sympathetically as she rose to her feet. "Don't cry! It will all come out right. I will leave you to think it over—alone."

Left to himself Matthew Brent remained silent for some moments; but as he slowly raised his eyes he murmured:

"So he came to know that his life had been a failure. He owned railroads and ships and factories—but he lived solely for himself. He knew not the meaning of love. He had no love for his fellow-man—no love for anyone!" Then as he gazed afar over the waters of the great Pacific: "Yes, there was some one. His heart must have gone out to Mary. Maybe in making her happy, he thought he was doing something for somebody.

"And this message to me! It is a voice from the past calling me back. It seems a sacred duty; yet I cannot go!

No, I cannot go!"

Again the aged man buried his face in his hands.

As he sat thus thinking, Tippo-Tib came from the house. Seeing Matthew's attitude he hastened to his side.

"Is the father sick?" he asked, as he kneeled beside him.

Slowly Matthew raised his head.

"No, Tippo-Tib, not sick; only heavy. I have heard a voice out of the past calling me back to my own people."

"Your own people?" asked Tippo-Tib looking at him in startled surprise. "Your own people? Are we not your own people? Who can love you as we love you? You couldn't leave us, Father? Only the Great Spirit can take you from us."

Tenderly Matthew laid his hand upon the native's head

as he exclaimed: "Only the Great Spirit."

Then rising to his feet: "No, Tippo-Tib, I cannot leave you. It would be more than I could bear. Come! We will think no more about it. Let us go about our daily task."

Laying his hand upon the native's shoulder, he slowly made his way toward the shore as Mary and Durham

emerged from the house.

"You have told him?" queried Durham.

"Yes," and as her eyes caught sight of the retreating couple she added sadly: "There he goes, Arthur. You can see by his manner the load I have laid upon him. Oh, why did Uncle Simon do this?"

"Why," exclaimed Durham in the utmost surprise. "I thought we had decided that it was the best thing he

could have done."

"It did seem so in New York; but somehow things look differently down here."

"I hope I don't look any different. Do I?"

"Oh, Arthur, I can't tell. Why did I ever leave this peaceful spot?"

Durham regarded her intently.

"Why did you ever—" and he stopped without finishing his question. "Say," he finally began in his abrupt manner, "what would I be doing if you hadn't? Have you forgotten all about me, Mary?"

"You know better; but as compared to Daddy's

happiness we seem of so little importance."

"Oh, we do, do we?" said Durham bristling.

"Well, don't we?"

"Not by a long shot. Your happiness is more to me than anything else."

A little flush of gratification spread itself over Mary's face as she said earnestly: "But I never could be happy if Daddy were unhappy."

"Then it's up to yours truly to make Daddy happy,"

said Durham emphatically. "But how?"

"You might ask your mother."

"Not for Artie," was the characteristic rejoinder. "I am just beginning to learn that mother's ideas of how to make a man happy and mine don't exactly agree. Suppose we go down to the beach and think it over."

CHAPTER IX

HAVING finished her cocoa, and to a certain extent having regained her composure—if not her good nature—Mrs. Durham made her appearance upon the porch and espied the young couple disappearing in the distance.

"Humph!" she ejaculated. "Paul and Virginia. All they need to make the picture complete is the palm leaf."

Finding herself alone Mrs. Durham made a hasty survey of her surroundings.

"Well, of all the dismal places," she finally said, "this is the worst."

Presently she saw Matthew approaching from the direction of the grove with a dozen natives at his heels, and her face hardened:

"That old man!" she ejaculated. "Why, the way he lords it over every one here is absurd. Equality, indeed, with the whole village following as if he were a king! Well, he can't lord it over me!" and she deliberately turned her back upon the approaching islanders.

If Mrs. Durham had any expectation that Matthew would see her or attempt to influence her in any way, she was greatly mistaken. He paid not the slightest attention to her, but again seated himself upon the rustic bench. Here he remained for several seconds with bowed head, while the natives silently withdrew.

Not hearing any noise, Mrs. Durham's curiosity prevailed and she turned slowly around. "I should think you would feel ashamed of yourself," she exclaimed after silently observing him for several minutes.

Matthew slowly raised his head.

"Were you speaking to me, Madam?"

"To whom else should I be speaking? Do you see any one else around here? I say I should think you would be ashamed of yourself."

"Why, Madam!" exclaimed Matthew in some surprise,

"What have I done?"

"It's not what you have done. It is what you have not done. The idea of letting that sailor go! He may come back at any time and kill the whole of us."

"Oh, I don't think so," and Matthew shrugged his

shoulders.

"And I suppose if you don't think so, it couldn't be so, no matter whether it is so or not."

Matthew made no reply, but arose to his feet with

the intention of quitting her presence.

"Do not make any attempt to apologize," she exclaimed, determined to forestall anything he might have to say. "You'll only make the matter worse! You wouldn't care if we were all murdered—now, would you?"

"Well," he replied slowly, "there are some without

whom we could get along very well."

Mrs. Durham exploded.

"Oh, there are, are there? Well, Mr. Matthew Brent, I will not intrude myself upon your hospitality any further. Thank heaven I have a private and comfortable place on board the yacht!"

Then as she turned to leave: "I can see now where Mary gets that stubborn disposition. Good morning, sir," and she swept herself out of sight around the house.

Matthew drew a long breath and shook his head.

"My! My!" he exclaimed. "What memories of the

world she recalls; but—" regretfully, "I'm sorry I offended her. I had almost forgotten what civilization is like. How thankful I ought to be."

Again he seated himself and was soon lost in his reflec-

tions.

He had not been thus absorbed long when Mary and Durham returned from their stroll. By the expression upon Durham's face he had evidently determined upon his line of action.

"Now, here's the proposition," he was explaining to Mary as they came through the palms. "Your Uncle Simon's estate must be settled. Your grandfather is the only man, at present, who can do it. If he won't return to New York of his own accord, he must either be driven or pulled back.

"Oh, Arthur!" exclaimed Mary as she caught sight of the bent figure. "You won't do or say anything to hurt

his feelings?"

"Not for a million," was his airy reply. "Now just

you keep quiet and take your cue from me."

Without a word Mary took a seat upon the porch, while Durham pulling himself together approached Matthew.

"Well," he began by way of introduction, "are all the daily duties finished, Mr. Brent?"

Matthew raised his head with a characteristic gesture.

"Oh, no, Captain; but Mary has told me something that weighs heavily upon my mind and I had to think it out. I suppose you know what I mean?"

"Yes, sir. Everybody in the United States knows

about-"

"What?" interrupted Matthew. "Everybody in the United States knows about Simon's will?"

"Sure! Why, as soon as the will was filed for probate, the papers printed columns about it."

"Columns?" increduously. "There were not columns to print."

Durham looked at him compassionately.

"Not columns? Why, Mr. Brent, some of the papers made pages; and one of them printed nearly half of the book over which you and your brother quarreled."

Matthew's face flushed.

"Still you want me to go back to New York? Why I wouldn't dare to show my face on Broadway, even if I wanted to—which I don't."

"But you've just got to go, Mr. Brent," insisted Durham impetuously.

Matthew rose to his feet with great dignity.

"Got to, sir! I don't like the phrase!" and he looked down upon the young man from under his shaggy eyebrows with an expression which reminded Arthur of Simon Brent more than anything the old man had yet done.

Seeing his mistake Durham explained hastily: "You don't understand me, sir. I mean that in justice to many people, you must go. Can't you see that if this great estate isn't properly administered—and that at once—it may result in serious injury to others—possibly ruin?"

For a moment Matthew made no reply, seemingly look-

ing within himself.

"Ruin," he repeated slowly. "I hadn't thought of that; but I should have known it. Yes, others may be ruined by something Simon has done."

Then as though looking back into the past he exclaimed: "Simon, Simon, why wouldn't you be guided

by me? Why have you done this?"

"Done what?" asked Durham in surprise.

"Taken other people's money, to be sure. Simon knew it was wrong."

"He didn't take anyone else's money, Mr. Brent. He made it all honestly."

"Honestly, do you say, Captain Durham? I cannot believe it. I have no doubt that he made it; but how could he make it honestly?"

"Easily enough, sir. Business is business and—" Matthew raised his hand to interrupt the speaker.

"Don't try to explain it," he said. "I couldn't understand. I should be of no use in trying to settle his estate. I'd be a round post in a square hole."

"Nonsense!" declared Durham emphatically. "You are square enough to fit any place. You will just have to go back."

"Impossible, Captain. There is no use of talking further. "I can't do it," and Matthew started to walk away as though the matter were settled.

"Very well, then, Mr. Brent. If that is your decision,

Mary will have to go back alone."

"What?" and Matthew turned abruptly. "Mary will have to go back alone? You don't think she would?"

Durham shrugged his shoulders.

"Ask her and see if she does not confirm my statement."

Matthew took a step toward the porch.

"Mary," he said, "tell me it isn't so. You don't have to go back to New York? You don't have to go and leave your poor old grandfather?"

"Why, Daddy, of course-"

"Of course, it is so," interrupted Durham, noticing the look of indecision on Mary's face. "Of course, it is so. She will have to go back and apply to the courts for another guardian—and she might not get one that would suit her. Isn't that so, Miss Brent?"

Mary drew a deep sigh as she slowly came down from

the porch.

"I suppose it is," she replied.

"Do you mean to tell me," said Matthew, "that you have to go back among all those sharks—with no one to protect you?"

Mary stood perplexed and her eyes sought those of

her lover in a questioning gaze.

"Well, not exactly unprotected, Mr. Brent," the young man ventured to explain. "I'll be there and—and—you know—well," then turning to Mary: "You should tell him!"

Mary shook her head and frowned. "I can't. You'll have to."

"But you know him better than I do," declared Durham. "Now, don't be stubborn. Tell him!"

Matthew regarded his granddaughter sternly. "Mary, what does he mean?"

The girl's face grew pink. "Oh nothing, Daddy, he's just talking."

Matthew shook his head. "That woman said you were

stubborn too."

Mary stamped her foot with impatience.

"Daddy, I'm not stubborn; and if you were not so blind you'd be able to guess."

"Oh, pshaw!" exclaimed Durham sheepishly. "He'd

never guess. Tell him."

Mary's face became even more rosy and she turned her

back upon both of them.

Matthew's face grew dark. "Mary," he said in a voice of stern command, "answer me. What is there to tell?"

For a moment there was silence and then Durham, summoning his courage, said boldly: "It isn't such a serious matter, Mr. Brent. Mary and I love each other. We would have been married before this, only Mary wanted to get your consent."

The expression of surprise upon Matthew's face would

have been humorous to any one except the two directly interested.

"Is this true?" he finally managed to gasp.

Mary turned with a look of happiness upon her face. "Can't you see it is?" she exclaimed. "Oh, Daddy, don't look at me so hard. You ought to know all about it; you were young once," and stepping forward she impulsively hid her face on her grandfather's shoulder.

Slowly Matthew lifted her head and gazed earnestly into her beautiful eyes. Then he turned questioningly

to Durham.

"Suppose, Captain," he asked quizzically, "that I

refuse to give my consent?"

"Oh, Daddy," exclaimed Mary under her breath, "you couldn't. And," she continued hastily, "he isn't Captain. He's just Arthur Durham, the son of Uncle Simon's best friend."

"But suppose I should refuse?" insisted Matthew.

"Then I'd marry her anyway," declared Durham recklessly, "and take her back to New York without you."

Matthew's face fell and he cast his eyes to the ground.

"So!" he ejaculated. "It has come to that."

"Arthur!" cried Mary in great distress. "Now you have hurt him!"

She drew more closely to her grandfather's side. "Daddy," she said earnestly, "he couldn't do it. Much as I love Arthur, I wouldn't go."

Matthew put his arm about her and drew her to his breast.

"I know you wouldn't," he said. "I know you wouldn't be so cruel."

Raising his head he looked the young man squarely in the face.

"Do you hear, Mr. Durham. She wouldn't leave me." For several moments they stood thus—the two men

eyeing each other fiercely, the girl beside them torn by the old conflict between love and duty.

Durham was the first to break the silence.

"Of course, sir," he said, "she knows her own mind best. I know you love her; but you don't love her any better than I do. Old man that you are, you would sacrifice her future to your happiness. I am willing to sacrifice my happiness to hers."

"Oh, Daddy," pleaded Mary, "Isn't there some way we

can all be happy? You must know some way!"

There was a long silence.

Finally Matthew spoke in a calm and measured voice, in which was neither anger nor pain. "Captain—Mr. Durham, although you are a young man you have proven yourself a better man than I—"

"Mr. Brent," interrupted Durham, starting forward.

Matthew raised his hand. "Let me finish. You have shown me that in spite of all my years of labor to a given end, when the test came, I was selfish."

"Daddy!" exclaimed Mary. "You don't even know

what that word means."

"At least, I am going to try to forget," was the answer. Again there was silence, broken only by the approach of Tippo-Tib and several natives. Seeing that Matthew was engaged they stopped at a little distance to await his pleasure.

"Yes," he finally continued. "I'm going to try to prove my unselfishness by doing something for you, which an hour ago seemed impossible. With your assistance,

Mr. Durham-"

"Oh, he can give you plenty of assistance," exclaimed Mary joyfully. "Arthur is a fine business man. Uncle Simon said he was."

Durham's face flushed as Matthew continued with just a touch of irony:

"Well then, Mr. Durham, if you will promise me your fine business assistance, I will try to fulfill the trust imposed upon me by my brother. I will go to New York."

"You will?" exclaimed Mary and Durham in the same

breath. "You will?"

Matthew drew himself up with great dignity. "You have my word," he replied, "I will go."

As the aged man announced his decision, Tippo-Tib came hastily forward. Throwing himself to the ground he grasped Matthew by the knees exclaiming: "Father! You said that only the Great Spirit should take you from us!"

"True, Tippo-Tib," replied Matthew as he raised the native to his feet, "and this is the Great Spirit—the great Spirit of Love, which would have us do others as we would have them do us."

CHAPTER X

IT WAS a cold morning in February. Billy had just dropped into Simon Brent's big office chair—a chair which had been occupied by nobody but Billy since Simon's death—and was busily engaged reading the

morning paper.

Billy had changed some since that day when he had brought Simon the letter from Matthew, which had so altered the lives of those about whom it was written. The nearly three years which had elapsed have developed Billy from a pug-nosed office boy into a strictly up-to-date clerk of almost twenty; but the years have taken away none of his boyish self-assurance. Rather have they added to it, so that Billy with his naturally quick perception, has become quite a valuable asset to the Brent office force.

Having thoroughly digested the sporting page, Billy turned the paper, remarking to himself: "If I don't finish before Prichard gets here, he'll take it away from me to read the patent medicine ads. Gee! It must be tough to have to fill yourself up with all that kind of dope!"

He slowly ran his eye down the first column.

"Hello! What's this? 'The steam yacht Arethusa arrived from the South Sea Islands last night, having on board Matthew Brent and his granddaughter Mary."

"So!" he exclaimed. "The old man has arrived—and Mary, too. Now, there's a girl for you," and he arose

and shoved his hands into his pockets. "The real thing. No two-sided affair. Thinks I'm just as good as she is.

"Of course," after a pause, "nobody could be that; but I don't see why I couldn't run this business just as well as any other man. I know New York—yes, and I know the bunch around here, too!" and Billy plunged his hands deeper into his pockets and himself correspondingly deeper into his reflections.

He was thus absorbed in his musings when the outer

door to the office opened slowly.

The noise attracted Billy, who turned to confront Matthew, fresh from his voyage, standing in the doorway.

Never before having seen Matthew, and not expecting that he would make his appearance thus unheralded, it is not at all surprising that Billy did not even surmise who he might be.

Matthew was indeed a quaint figure.

He had exchanged his white suit for a dark one. Instead of his tropical helmet, he wore a broad-rimmed, black hat which accentuated his white hair and abundant white beard. He still wore his white shoes, but had completely enveloped himself in a huge, fur-lined overcoat, with a large rolling collar. He was, in short, a revivified Joaquin Miller.

Billy eyed him suspiciously, although impressed by

his cheery voice.

"Good morning, young man," was Matthew's greeting. "Is this the office of Simon Brent?"

"Yes, sir; but he's dead."

"Well, I'm glad to get here. I had a hard time finding the place."

He advanced into the room and glanced about.

"Anybody could have told you, if you had asked," said Billy.

"I expect so," chuckled Matthew, "but I thought I

could find my way to Park Row without asking. Thought I'd know the landmarks; but the only thing I've seen that looked natural is Trinity, and that's shrunk. It used to be mighty tall. When did they build that big bridge?"

Billy shook his head.

"It was here when I came," he said.

"Yes, I expect so," said Matthew. "They were talking about it the last I remember. What's become of French's hotel?"

Billy drew back and eyed Matthew more suspiciously than before.

"Never heard of French's hotel," he finally said. Then after a pause: "You know what city this is, don't you?"

"Well, I should say so. French's used to be up there somewhere, but I guess I can't see it for the big buildings."

He walked around and inspected the office.

"You'd never guess how I did find the place," he finally said.

"Asked a policemen. That's what you ought'a done." Matthew shook his head.

"Maybe you asked a newsboy."

"I did," laughed Matthew, "but he couldn't speak

English."

"That's right," Billy agreed in a tone that was a veritable snort. "If you want to do business in New York today, you got to speak Greek."

Matthew regarded the lad with much interest.

"You don't tell me," he said. "I didn't know New York had become so classical."

"You'll find it classy all right," was Billy's interpretation of Matthew's remark. Then after a moment: "But how did you finally find your way here from—well, from wherever you came from?"

"I picked out the tallest building I could see and took a chance. I thought if Simon was such a big man, he must own the biggest building." Then as an after thought: "It's a mighty long climb up twenty flights of stairs."

Billy drew a long breath. He was too dumbfounded to speak, but watched Matthew as he stopped in front of the bookcase.

"My books," muttered Matthew, as he opened the case and took one in his hand, "and he really had been reading them. Poor Simon!"

He slowly replaced the book, while Billy remarked to himself that "the old man is making himself at home."

"I wonder where he escaped from?" he thought.

Matthew turned upon the lad suddenly.

"I don't suppose you are the manager."

"Not yet!" and Billy threw out his chest. "Guess again."

Matthew smiled quizzically.

"I'm not good at guessing, but I would be glad to know whom I have the honor of addressing."

Billy was puzzled.

"Honor!" he exclaimed. "That's new, but it's good. Well, I'm the private secretary to the head of the house."

He put his thumbs into the armholes of his vest, seated himself in Simon's big chair and crossed his legs.

So absorbed was he in his own little joke that he failed to notice the twinkle in Matthew's eye as he retorted: "You don't say so! His private secretary!" Then a bit seriously: "I see you are a young man of great possibilities; if you are not careful, however, I am afraid your future will be as short as it seems to be brilliant. But tell me: Is this where Simon spent his life?"

The impressive manner of the last question had its effect upon Billy and he observed Matthew more carefully.

"Some old friend," he thought. Aloud, he said more respectfully: "Not quite, sir. Up to the time his niece came, he slept and ate at the club."

Matthew laughed.

"Then he did get away from business long enough to eat; and I suppose," he continued waving his hand, "he called this living."

"Why sure!" replied Billy springing to his feet.

"Don't you?"

Matthew unbuttoned the great fur-lined coat and the old-fashioned Prince Albert he wore beneath it. Slowly he put one hand into his trousers' pocket, while Billy observed his attitude.

"Young man," he asked, "does this seem to you to be living—to spend your days within four walls, trying to see how much money you can pile up; and to spend your nights at the club, where the only friends you have are the ones you buy?"

Billy scratched his head and eyed Matthew curiously. "It seems pretty good to me," he finally retorted, "to pile up the dollars."

Matthew shook his head sadly.

"Seems is just the word; but it only seems. It isn't good; it isn't living."

"No?" queried Billy.

"No," replied Matthew. "Living, young man, doesn't consist in trying to do somebody, as the saying goes. It consists in doing for somebody."

Then suddenly changing the subject: "But what time

does Mr. Morris get down?"

"Along about ten o'clock. Have you an appointment?" Matthew smiled broadly.

"Not exactly, but I rather think he is expecting me."
"Well, he won't be here for some time," was Billy's
abrupt reply as he turned to the typewriter. "You've

got plenty of time to go out for a shave and a hair cut."
"Wh-wh-wh-at?" exclaimed Matthew in some anger and
more surprise. "A shave?"

Billy nodded his head in the affirmative.

For some moments Matthew pondered over the suggestion while he gently stroked his long white beard.

"Do you think I really need a shave?" he finally asked.

"I hope you'll excuse me, sir," laughed Billy. "I didn't mean to give you free advice; but a barber would make you look a whole lot more like New York and less like Rip Van Winkle."

Matthew regarded the boy with an amused expression.

"You're honest anyway."

"Honest!" retorted Billy while the blood rushed to his face. "I wouldn't take a nick that didn't belong to me if I was starving—and that's a whole lot more than some folks around here can say."

"There! There!" soothingly. "Don't be offended. I simply mean you are honest in your opinion. But where

is the staff?"

"The staff?" in surprise. "What are you talking about?"

"The office staff. They ought to be here by this time. It's after eight o'clock, Mr.—Mr.—what did you say your name was?"

"Me? My name is Sharpe; Billy Sharpe."

Matthew smiled broadly.

"Sharpe? Then you'll see the point when I confide in you—"

"Better not," said Billy, edging away. "Better keep

your troubles to yourself."

"Trouble? Who said anything about trouble?" and Matthew looked sternly at the young man. "I was simply going to tell you that as I expect to be around New York a good deal in settling up my brother Simon's estate—"

"Wha-wha-what?" stammered Billy, almost overcome by his surprise. "Your—your brother? Say, who are

you anyway?"

Matthew chuckled softly to himself as he replied in much the same manner that Billy had answered a similar question: "I am Matthew Brent, the head of the house, whose private secretary I understand you are."

Billy literally fell into the chair.

"Oh, Theodore!" he gasped. "Brother Matthew!"

"Exactly! And now, young man, unless you want to make good my prediction of a short and brilliant future—you'll look sharp, too."

He took Billy by the ear and raised him to his feet.

"Say, let go of that!" ejaculated Billy, pulling away. "I guess you don't know how they treat clerks in New York." Then in a changed tone: "But honest, Mr. Brent, I didn't mean nothing. I was just having a little fun."

"After this, young man, have your fun with those of your own age and learn to treat your elders with respect. That's the way I was taught when I was a boy. However," in a milder tone, "I will overlook your impertinence this morning on one condition. I am an old man and have been away from New York for many years. I can see you are a bright young man. If you will coach me a bit, as we used to say, I'll do the right thing by you.

"Now then, you suggested a shave. Do you really think I'd make a better impression if I'd cut of these

whiskers?"

"Well," stammered Billy, in the mildest fashion, "as I said before, Mr. Brent, I ain't long on giving advice; but if I was going to do business in these offices, I'd part with the spinach and the sombrero."

"What, the hat, too?"

Matthew took off his broad-rimmed headgear and examined it critically.

Then suddenly: "How about this overcoat?" "That's all right. That's the real thing."

"It was Simon's," explained Matthew. "I found it hanging up in the closet. It looks like a pretty good coat.

It must have cost as much as forty dollars."

Billy smiled as he remembered very well the day when Simon sent him down to the furriers with a check for \$2,500 to pay for that identical garment.

"Simon and I were about of a size," Matthew continued.

"You don't look much alike," ventured Billy. "No, I reckon not. I'm pretty old-fashioned."

"But you're not old, Mr. Brent—barring these," and Billy indicated the whiskers.

"No, indeed," exclaimed Matthew straightening him-

self: "I don't feel a day over fifty."

"And by the twinkle in your eye," continued Billy, "I bet five dollars the barber can make you look it." Then confidentially: "Say, let him do it! New York ain't got no use for old men."

"I think you're right, William. Yes, I think you're

quite right."

Matthew started for the door while Billy threw open the typewriter desk and seated himself in the little chair.

"What's that?" asked Matthew, stopping in the door-way and coming back.

"That's a typewriter."

"Oh," exclaimed Matthew, examining it curiously. "One of those letter writing machines. I've read about them, but I never saw one of them before."

Billy raised his eyes and looked at Matthew in astonishment. "What are you giving me? Never saw a typewriter?"

"We don't have any need of such things in Tonga."

Billy slid the paper under the roll, remarking with a

sigh:

"I'm afraid New York's going to be most too fast for you, Mr. Brent." Then as he began to write: "You'll excuse me, but this report has to go out the first thing every morning."

Matthew watched him with unfeigned curiosity, until

he had finished.

"Looks mighty easy," he commented. "I got used to that other new fangled thing on the ship," and he pointed to the telephone, "although I never had nerve enough to talk to it. What do you call this?" and he laid his hand on the ticker which stood beside the desk.

"That's a stock ticker."

"Looks like an old-fashioned telegraph instrument—with all of this paper running out of it. Captain Durham was telling me they take messages by sound now; but of course I know better than that. I ain't quite as 'green' as I look," and the old man winked knowingly. "Are you a telegrapher?"

"No, sir," but anybody can read this." Billy held out the tape toward Matthew. "Here's yesterday's closing,

see."

Matthew examined the tape carefully.

"What's this mean?" he asked. "Call money three and a quarter."

"That's the rate on money. Gee, but it's high."

"Is it? I always thought seven per cent. was the legal interest."

If Billy knew what Matthew was talking about he made no indication, so absorbed had he become in the tape.

"Oh, Theodore!" he exclaimed. "Look at this: General Electric closed, one fifty-nine and a quarter asked:

one fifty-nine bid. This is a good time to buy."

"Is that so?" and Matthew looked at the boy in surprise. "Well, I don't want any."

"Any what?" "Electricity."

Billy laughed aloud.

"This ain't electricity. This is General Electric Company stock."

"Stock!" snorted Matthew. "Stock! Well, I don't want

any stock, either."

"You mean you think it ain't a good investment?"

"I mean for anything. I don't own any and I don't want any."

Billy winked his left eye slowly as he dropped the tape

into the basket.

"You're a good one all right, Mr. Brent. They can't fool you. I bet when you get on the Street you'll trim 'em."

"Trim 'em?" repeated Matthew. "Oh, yes," and he passed his hand over his whiskers. "I most forgot. I did start to trim 'em, didn't I? Guess I had better do it right off."

Again he started for the door when his eye was attracted to the newspaper which Billy had been reading.

"If you don't mind," he said, "I'll take this along to read at the barber shop. Why," as he glanced it over, "it's the Tri-bune. It's Greeley's paper." Confidentially. "I used to work on the Tri-bune fifty years ago. It looks about the same," turning the paper over. "Great man, Greeley; ever meet him? Of course not! Of course not!"

Matthew chuckled to himself.

"You'd hardly know Greeley, would you? But say, why don't you follow his advice?"

"Advice?" and Billy wrinkled his brow. "Oh, yes, you

mean the one best bet."

It was Matthew's turn to be puzzled.

"That's a new name for it," he said, "but maybe that's what you call it now. The advice was this: 'Go west, young man; go west.'"

"Humph!" from Billy in disgust. "That ain't no

good advice."

"No?"

"No, I tried it once. Went as far as Buffalo. Gee, but it was slow!"

Matthew regarded him quizzically. "I see New Yorkers haven't changed much after all. That's what we thought about Buffalo fifty years ago. But I was looking for the *Planet*. Haven't got one, have you?"

"No, sir. I never read the Planet."

"Why not?"

"The sport page ain't no good. But I can get you one."

"Never mind," replied Matthew as he was leaving the office, "I'll get one on the way to the barber shop. I suppose there is a shop near by?"

"Next floor below."

"All right. Tell Mr. Morris I am here," and Matthew went out leaving the boy to ruminate on the changed conditions.

CHAPTER XI

FRANKLIN Morris was an ambitious man.

He had always felt that he could manage great enterprises as well, or better than Simon Brent. His successful conduct of the Brent estate since the passing

of Simon had strengthened his opinion.

During Simon's lifetime it had frequently been necessary-in order to further some great financial projectto control, or at least to influence, legislation. This work had, for the last few years, been entrusted to Morris, but always under Simon's direction. For the last two or three times, however, Morris had been less subservient. To further his own interests he had sought the assistance of Gilson Gage.

It was his effort to repay this assistance that had induced him to play false to Simon. Only he and Durham knew that Simon's death alone had saved Morris from

ignominy and oblivion.

Misjudging his own ability, Morris now hoped to take Simon's place in the financial world and to use Gage as

a subordinate.

Had Morris confined his ambition solely to acquiring a place in the financial world, all might have gone well for an indefinite time; but he had ambitions along different lines.

He desired to be a power in the conduct of the national government.

Neither was he satisfied, as Simon had been, to sit in

the background and pull the strings. He longed for the limelight. Thus it was that he had cast his eye upon an exalted position in the President's Cabinet.

A new presidential term was about to begin. Changes might reasonably be expected. Industrial and foreign conditions were such that it was only right that the great financial interests should be consulted.

This was Morris's opportunity.

To him, conditions favorable to the advancement of his

plans seemed most propitious.

For the time being he was in almost absolute control of the Brent millions. The only man in position to discredit him was on the other side of the world. The executor of Simon's will was not expected in New York for some weeks. Whenever he did come, it never occurred to Morris that he would interfere with existing conditions.

"Matthew Brent has been out of the world for years," he told himself, "and it will be impossible for him to settle the estate, or even to manage it, without my assist-

ance. It is the opportune moment."

Thereupon he sent for Gilson Gage.

Now if there were a natural successor to Simon Brent, Gilson Gage was the man. He was a born money-maker, an organizer, a diplomat and a politician. The one thing lacking to make him great, was moral strength. There was this in common between him and Morris: they were absolutely unscrupulous in the methods they might employ to a given end. Otherwise they were as far apart as the poles.

Morris longed for political power in order to plume his

vanity.

Gage would rather have been in Simon Brent's shoes than to have been President of the United States. How anyone could wish to hold office, was a mystery to him.

Therefore, he misunderstood Morris.

When that gentleman began to talk about available material for the treasury portfolio, Gage never dreamed that Morris might want it himself. He thought Morris simply wanted a man who would be friendly in the Street. Such a one was Alexander Bowen, president of the Cosmopolitan Bank, a man who would be most acceptable to the administration as well as to financiers.

Gage mentioned him to Morris.

"He's a good man," declared Gage.

"Undoubtedly," replied Morris, "unless we can find a better."

"That would be pretty hard!"

"True," replied Morris, thinking only of himself, "but there is one. Today, he occupies a most exalted position. You know him."

"Oh, do I?"

"Certainly."

Gage scratched his head. He did not wish to appear ignorant and so he finally said: "Well, yes, I expect I do; but I think Bowen the most available."

"Maybe," said Morris, "but I think not. Of course," he added, as he felt that Gage understood, "I do not wish to appear to name the new secretary. Now that you know whom I desire I'll leave the matter entirely in your hands. I'm sure you'll pick the right man."

Gage pondered a few hours over Morris's words. He could think of no one as suitable as Bowen, and as Morris had said he would leave the matter entirely in his hands, he decided to act upon his own judgment.

Whereupon he notified the incoming administration that Bowen would be most acceptable.

The fact leaked out in Washington, as such matters do, and was made the subject of a news story.

When Morris saw the story in the evening paper, he was furious.

"The idiot!" he cried, and immediately set to work to carry out his own selfish ends.

The first thing to be done was to create a flurry in the

market.

The second was to order an editorial in the *Planet*, attributing the flurry to lack of confidence in Bowen by the financial interests.

This plan he proceeded to put into effect on the afternoon prior to Matthew Brent's arrival in New York, the editorial appearing in the *Planet* the following morning.

When Gage picked up the paper on his arrival at his office he was as angry as Morris had been the evening before. Recognizing at once Morris's hand in the matter, he burst into that gentleman's office just as he had laid aside his hat and overcoat.

"Say, Morris," he exclaimed abruptly, "what do you think you're trying to do?"

Morris regarded him in feigned surprise as he observed

him coldly.

"Excuse me, Mr. Gage," he said, "but I don't think I quite understand you. However, if you have anything especial to say, we had better retire to another room."

He led the way to Simon's private office, where, after sending Billy out and closing the door, he said fiercely:

"Now, then, Gage, what's the matter?"

"You know what's the matter. This flurry in the market and hammering down of prices."

"Well, why should you object?" with a laugh. "It will

give you a chance to fill your shorts."

"Bosh! What's the use of beating about the bush? You know very well it's not myself I'm thinking about."

Morris shrugged his shoulders.

"I know so little what you think, that I have given up trying to find out. I thought maybe you had lost a few thousand." "You know that isn't it," replied Gage angrily, "it's the effect on the Bowen appointment."

"What's that to me?" retorted Morris. "I can't see

that I have anything to do with that."

Gage regarded his companion in speechless wonder,

while each minute his rage increased.

Approaching nearer to Morris and shaking his finger under his nose he exclaimed vehemently: "See here, Morris, I won't stand for any nonsense. You and I know each other too well to quibble over words. With your consent it has been announced that Bowen is practically slated for the secretaryship. Now, right on top of it, comes this flurry in the market."

"Well!" and Morris looked coldly upon the excited

man.

"It isn't well," shouted Gage, "and you know it. It's

a put up job, and here's the proof of it."

He pointed to the editorial in the Planet which he held in his other hand. "Everybody knows that you control the Planet and here's a statement that the disturbance in the market is due to lack of confidence in Bowen. I want to know what you are trying to do."

"I don't think I said I was trying to do anything."

"No, but you are. Come! Out with it! Don't you want Bowen?"

Morris remained silent for a moment as he eyed Gage

quizzically.

"Don't you remember that I said that there might be a better man for the place than Alexander Bowen?" he asked.

"Yes; but we finally decided on Bowen."

Morris could not help smiling as he remarked: "Oh, we did?"

"Sure, didn't we?"

"Not that I ever heard of."

Gage grew red in the face and was about to make an angry reply when Morris laid his hand on his shoulder.

"Gage," he began, "I took you for a smart man; but you're not. You're so money-mad that you can't understand how anyone can want anything but money. I don't want Bowen appointed and I never said I did."

Again Gage changed color. When he spoke there was

a note of alarm in his voice.

"That isn't the way I understood it," he said. "I thought you favored Bowen and that's why I decided upon him. I'm sorry you don't like it, but I don't see how we can change it now. You can't play politics that way. Nobody will stand for it."

Morris's face grew hard.

"They'll have to stand for it. Today I'm king of the Street and you know it."

"If I don't," growled Gage, "I seem in a good way of

finding out."

"Yes; and the cabinet makers will find it out. I am going to name the new secretary of the treasury, or I'll know why."

"But I thought you were satisfied with Bowen?" expos-

tulated Gage.

"Well, I'm not."

"Well, whom do you want?"

"If you were not so thick-headed you'd be able to see without my having to mention names. Who is it that stepped into Simon Brent's place and handled his affairs so as to prevent the panic, which everyone predicted would follow his death? Who is it that has kept things level for the last three months? Who is it—"

For a moment Gage eyed the speaker in amazement,

and then burst into a boisterous laugh.

"What!" he exclaimed. "You can't mean it." Then seeing that Morris was in earnest he blurted out: "Well,

say, I like your nerve, Morris; but you know it can't be done."

Morris's face grew dark.

"Why can't it be done?" he asked angrily. "Hasn't the Street been promised that it should name the man, and don't I control the Street?"

"Morris, you're crazy. Why, the public wouldn't stand for you a minute."

"The public be-"

"There! There!" interrupted Gage. "Be original at least."

"Well, I mean it," insisted Morris. "The public will have to stand for whoever is named."

Gage threw the paper onto the table and shoved both

hands deep into his pockets.

"Now, see here, Morris," he finally said, "use a little common sense. With a new party just coming into power, you don't think the president-elect is going to be fool enough to name a man like you as a member of his cabinet. Old Simon's cloak may have fallen upon you, and it looks as though it had; but can you imagine anyone naming Simon Brent for the position?"

Morris seated himself at the table and motioned Gage

to do likewise.

"Now listen to me, Gage," he said after a pause, "I'm going to be just as frank with you as I know how. I know you can do this sort of thing if you wish, and so do you. You're the one man in the United States who can help me to realize my ambition and I—" he paused significantly.

"Well," said Gage, "go on."

"I am the one man in the world who can help you to realize yours."

Gage looked at him inquisitively.

"What do you think my ambition is?" he finally asked.

"To occupy the place in the financial world left vacant by Simon Brent."

Gage shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, that is a pretty good guess, but I don't see that

I need your help."

"Then you're not as smart as I thought you were. Without my help you can never get there."

"Why?"

"Because you need Simon Brent's money to put you there."

Gage drew a cigar from his vest pocket and lighted it; then as he threw away the match:

"Well, don't you think my chances of getting it are

pretty good?"

"Knowing exactly what you are thinking, I say no,

that is, not without my help."

"Why not? I have always been well received by Miss Brent. I don't think there is anyone who has a better chance, do you?"

"No one but Arthur Durham," replied Morris signif-

icantly.

"Durham? Oh, well, yes, he is good enough as boys go; but I'm not afraid of him. I never yet failed to get anything I started after."

"No?" sneered Morris, "but if I should tell Miss Brent

the kind of a man you are-"

"What do you mean?" asked Gage angrily. "I don't

see that I am different from the average man."

"Possibly not; but you should have learned by this time that Mary Brent is a whole lot different from the average girl. She has no more idea of what New York is like than a baby. Down where she came from they don't look at things as we do here. Why, if she knew one-tenth of the things you do daily—and think they are right—she would consider you blacker—"

"By George, Morris," exclaimed Gage starting to his feet, "that is why I like her. She is different from any woman I have ever met. I'd like the use of old Simon's money; but, believe me, I'd rather have Mary Brent than every cent of it."

"Then help me to get this appointment," said Morris

also rising.

Gage threw up his hands. "It can't be done. The thing has gone too far."

"Tell that to the other fellow, I know better."

For several moments there was silence between them.

"How can you help me?" Gage finally asked.

"First, by keeping my mouth shut. Secondly, when it is decided that I am to go to Washington, I'll see that you are put in my place here. That'll put you on a confidential footing with the girl. The rest ought to be easy."

Gage removed the cigar from between his teeth and

regarded the ashes thoughtfully.

"It would seem so, wouldn't it?"

"If things are as you say."

"Well, I think they are. Anyway it's worth trying."

He arose and took a couple of turns about the office. "I'll see what I can do about this Bowen matter," and

he ran his eyes over the tape that was rapidly falling into the basket. "The market will have to be played exactly right. Any slip may queer us both."

Morris smiled superciliously. "Leave that to me. I

know my-"

The outer door opened suddenly and Mary Brent, clad in furs and followed by Tippo-Tib, entered the room.

So unexpected was her appearance that for the moment both men were speechless. To their guilty conscience, it seemed that she must have heard their plotting and come to accuse them.

The presence of Tippo-Tib added to their consternation.

Who and what he might be, they could not surmise. "Why, Miss Brent!" Morris finally managed to say,

"Where-"

His words were cut short by Mary.

"Oh, Mr. Morris!" she exclaimed. "Have you seen

anything of my grandfather?"

Morris drew a long breath as he realized that she was not an accusing Nemesis. Still his surprise was great and his manner showed it as he replied: "Why, no. Were

you expecting to find him here?"

"Oh, I don't know what I expected," and she fairly wrung her hands in anxiety. "I had hoped he might have found his way here. He left the house early this morning, telling Tippo-Tib he was going to take a walk. Where do you think he can be?"

"Right here, Mary! Right here!" came a familiar voice

from the doorway.

All eyes were turned in the direction of the voice, where they beheld a cleanly-shaven, middle aged gentleman, wearing a silk hat and carrying a fur-lined overcoat on his arm.

"Yes, Mary, here I am. Don't you think I know New York well enough to take care of myself?"

CHAPTER XII

FOR a moment after Matthew made his appearance in his changed attire Mary stood speechless, while Tippo-Tib gazed upon him much in the same manner as does the terrier gazing into the phonograph; he knew his master's voice if not his face.

Mary was the first to grasp the situation.

"Daddy!" she exclaimed, throwing up her hands in astonishment. "What have you done to yourself? Where are your whiskers?"

"Gone," replied Matthew solemnly as he removed his hat and advanced into the room. "Gone with the

sombrero. I have been taking some advice."

He disposed of his overcoat, and turning to Mary, asked:

"Which of these is Mr. Morris?"

"This is Mr. Morris, Daddy," she replied, presenting that gentleman, "and this," turning to the other, "is Mr.

Gage, a friend of Uncle Simon."

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Morris! Glad to meet you, Mr. Gage," and Matthew shook hands effusively with both gentlemen. "Glad to meet you both. New York has surely grown some in fifty years."

The two men exchanged amused glances and Gage

replied with his best political smile:

"I'm certainly pleased to meet you, Mr. Brent; both you and your charming granddaughter. I believe New York was formerly your home?"

"Oh, yes," replied Matthew, "I lived here for quite a while. I was a reporter on the Tri-bune, Horace Greeley's paper, you know. Great man, Greeley. Did you ever know him?"

Gage laughed heartily.

"No. I think I was born about the time Greeley died." Then, as he started toward the door: "But I must get over on 'Change. I suppose you'll keep your brother's seat, Mr. Brent?"

"Seat!" exclaimed Matthew in surprise. "Seat—seat—why, what seat?"

"He means your seat on 'Change," explained Morris.

"Oh, yes, oh, yes," said Matthew brusquely. "I shall want a seat—"

"If you don't," interrupted Gage, "I shall be glad to take it off your hands. There's a standing offer of forty thousand dollars for it."

Matthew looked first at Gage and then at Mary.

"Forty thousand dollars?" he finally exclaimed. "Forty thousand dollars for a seat. I'll sell all the furniture in the office for one-tenth that."

A general laugh followed.

"Your seat, Mr. Brent," explained Morris, "means your membership on 'Change."

Matthew's face flushed and he manifested considerable

confusion.

"Oh, yes," he said after a pause, "I'd forgotten. Of course I knew that." Then to Gage with a laugh: "No, I don't think I'll sell just yet. I'll keep it for a while."

Aside to Mary he said: "I'm pretty old-fashioned,

ain't I? But I told you how it would be."

"A few old-fashioned men are needed," said Gage, who overheard the side remark. "We'll talk about the seat later," and he bowed himself out of the office.

"Well, I guess I'm old-fashioned enough to suit him,"

Matthew laughed. "What are you doing here, Mary?" and the old man turned again to his granddaughter.

"I came to look after you."

"Oh, I don't need any looking after—not now," he added as an afterthought, "but I'll have to admit I wasn't so certain of it when I first left the house. Why, I had no idea that New York would ever grow away out the other side of Harlem river. No, sir."

"Harlem is pretty well down town now," said Morris. "But how did you find your way, Daddy?" asked Mary.

"Well, it's a funny thing. You see I was strolling along trying to locate myself and looking at the different kinds of street cars—especially the horseless carriages—when I noticed a big bridge. In a minute I saw a train of cars going across it. I couldn't see where they came from, nor where they went; so I asked a policeman what railroad it was. 'It's the subway,' says he. 'Subway'? says I thinking he must be joking. 'I thought it was one of the elevated roads I've been told about. How can the subway be away up in the air like that?' 'It's the way it's built,' says he.

"I didn't say anything, because I didn't want to appear 'green,' so I just went over and examined it. There was a milkman standing in front of a store and I asked him if those cars would take me to Park Row. 'Oh, yes,' says he, 'take an express and get off at the bridge.' I started to climb the stairs and the first thing I knew the whole stairway was going up too. I came pretty near getting off, but I'd seen so many strange sights I thought it must

be all right and so I just stuck on.

"I took the first train that came along. In a minute we were in a tunnel. Well, I guess you know the rest. They finally came to the end of the road and I got off and followed the crowd upstairs. Then I surely was lost. Why, do you know," and he emphasized each word, "the

only thing I could see that looked like it did fifty years ago was a little patch of green grass. I guess grass always will be grass, even in New York."

"After this you'd better stick to your automobile,"

suggested Morris. "It'll be easier and quicker."

"I don't know about the quicker," laughed Matthew. "We certainly did come fast through that tunnel; but your—"

A clerk entered and handed Morris a telegram which he

read hastily.

"Take this message," he said, while Matthew regarded him in surprise.

The clerk opened his notebook.

"Allen & Stone, Chicago. Replying to your enquiry, the cable address is—"

He stopped meditatively.

"I'll have to consult my memorandum. Come into my office," and he abruptly left the room followed by the clerk, leaving Matthew with his speech still unfinished.

"Mr. Morris is a pretty busy man since Uncle Simon

died," explained Mary as the two men disappeared.

"More busy than polite," replied Matthew. "He might have said: 'Excuse me.'"

"I don't believe they ever think of saying such things in business offices, Daddy. I never heard them."

"Maybe you haven't seen much of business."

"Not a great deal; but I used to come here frequently to see Uncle Simon."

"How did he talk to people—to Mr. Morris, for instance?" asked Matthew with much interest.

"Not much like you, Daddy. Uncle Simon was rather—rather—well, rather—"

"Positive," suggested Matthew.

Mary laughed. "Well, yes, only I was going to use a little stronger word. He just gave orders."

"Uh, huh!" exclaimed Matthew and he slowly rubbed his freshly shaven chin. "I wonder what he would have said about this?"

He opened the paper he carried in his hand and laid it on the desk.

"What is it?"

"It's something I don't approve of; but you wouldn't understand. I'd like to speak to Mr. Morris about it."

"Well, why don't you?"

"I'd hate to hurt his feelings. You see it might not be his fault," explained Matthew.

"It wouldn't do any harm to speak to him, would it?"

queried Mary. "You're not afraid of him, are you?"

"Afraid!" Matthew's eyes snapped and he drew himself to his full height. "Mary, I was never afraid of anybody or anything in my life—except to do wrong. I would be afraid to do wrong, and that's why I kind o' don't like to speak to Mr. Morris about this matter. He's so dignified, he doesn't look as though he could be unkind. But of course you can't always tell. I wish Arthur was here."

Mary laughed outright.

"Nonsense, Daddy. Do just as Uncle Simon used to. It's your business to know about everything connected with the estate. Here comes Mr. Morris now. I'll leave you with him and I shall not worry about you any more. I see you are able to take care of yourself."

"With a little help," added Matthew grimly as he turned toward the door through which Morris was

returning, followed by Billy.

"I suppose you know William, don't you, Mary?" Matthew asked as he caught sight of the boy. "He tells me he's to be my secretary."

"Yes, indeed," she replied gaily. "Billy and I are good

friends, aren't we, Billy?"

Billy's face grew red and for once in his life his voice

failed him as Mary continued: "If you can spare Billy, Mr. Morris, I'm going to ask him to put me and Tippo-Tib into my car." She crossed to the door: "Now, don't work too hard, Daddy, and I'll call for you in a couple of hours.

"Come, Tippo-Tib," she said in Tonganese, turning to the Islander who had been diligently polishing the brass buttons of his overcoat with the tail of the garment; "the father won't need you this morning."

Left alone with Morris, Matthew seated himself at the

desk.

"Bright boy, that," he remarked indicating Billy.

"Oh, yes," replied Morris indifferently, "I have found him so."

"And quite a newspaper, this?" indicating the *Planet* spread out on the desk.

"I believe it ranks with the best."

"Glad to hear it. Glad to hear it," said Matthew. "I'm much interested in newspapers. Let's see—I believe I mentioned the fact that I worked on the Tri-bune fifty years ago. Greeley's paper. Great man, Greeley. Ever met him?"

"No, sir," replied Morris stiffly, "I never did; but I returned to say that I trust you will excuse me this morning. I am very busy and unless you have something which you especially wish to say to me, I should like to postpone our first interview until tomorrow. Naturally, there are a great many things you would like to know, which I have not the time to tell you now."

He turned as though to depart, but Matthew, with an air of grim determination detained him, saying with some hesitation: "Excuse me, Mr. Morris, but there is one matter which I would like to discuss right now."

Morris turned and regarded Matthew with mingled astonishment and anger.

"Unless it is very important," he began when Matthew interrupted him with:

"It is very important, Mr. Morris—that is, it seems so

to me. Won't you be seated?"

There was that in Matthew's voice which, though gentle, brooked no refusal and Morris sank into a chair with a decided air of disgust.

If Matthew noticed his manner he gave no evidence of it

as he cast his eyes on the paper before him.

"The matter about which I wish some information, Mr. Morris, has to do with the *Planet*. I am told it is one of the properties belonging to my brother's estate."

Morris indicated a little more interest.

"Your information is quite correct," he said.

"Do you have anything to do with its management, Mr. Morris?"

Morris shook his head.

"Not directly. Mr. Duvall is its publisher and is responsible for its policies."

"I see. Could I have a talk with Mr. Duvall?"

"Certainly! We are all in the same building. I'll ask him to come up," and Morris picked up the phone.

"No, don't do that!" exclaimed Matthew as he raised his

hand. "Suppose we go and see him."

"Oh, very well," replied Morris as he set down the instrument. "It makes no difference to me."

Matthew slowly folded his paper and arose from his chair.

"I don't suppose you take much interest in politics?" he remarked as they prepared to leave the room. "Business men did not when I was a reporter."

"Only in a business way," was Morris's rather ambigu-

ous reply.

"Then I don't suppose you know much about this Alexander Bowen I see mentioned in the Planet."

Morris eyed Matthew as though he would read his thoughts.

"I know he is the president of the Cosmopolitan Bank,"

he finally said.

"Uh, huh!" ejaculated Matthew. "Honest man, I suppose—as bankers go?"

"Undoubtedly."
"Good citizen?"

"So far as I know."

"Successful financier?"

"Oh, yes," replied Morris, getting a bit nervous; "but I think Mr. Duvall can give you more definite information," and he led the way to the elevator.

"I'd forgotten there was such a thing as an elevator," laughed Matthew as they entered it, "and I walked up."

Morris smiled sarcastically:

"I expect you will find you have forgotten a good many things. You'd better go a little slow at first."

Whatever Matthew thought of the advice, he made no

reply.

Mr. Duvall was glad to see them—at least he professed to be. It would not be surprising, however, if he were a little disturbed—for Matthew's arrival might mean a great change, a change which would be far from pleasing to a man who had been in almost absolute charge of a great metropolitan daily for several years.

"I am glad to know you," was Matthew's reply, made to the introduction by Morris. "I am glad to meet a modern newspaper man. You know I was a newspaper

man myself."

"I knew you were an author," was Duvall's diplomatic reply, "but I am not sure I knew about your newspaper work."

"Oh, yes," continued Matthew confidentially, "I was on the Tri-bune fifty years ago. Greeley's paper. Great

man, Greeley. Ever meet him?" Then as he noted Duvall's somewhat youthful face: "I suppose not. I forgot how old I am."

"Perhaps you would like to look about the Planet?" suggested Duvall. "It might interest you to see how a

modern newspaper is conducted."

"Quite different from what it was when I was on the Tri-bune, I expect," laughed Matthew as he accepted the invitation to look around.

Duvall led the way, followed by Matthew and Morris the latter having the wisdom to see that this was no time

to lose sight of the former.

The tour of inspection started with the press room, where the great straight-line presses were running out the noon edition. To say that Matthew was astonished at their size and the rapidity with which they turned out a paper folded and ready for the newsboys, would be but a mild way of stating his amazement.

"It doesn't seem possible!" he exclaimed time and time again. "Now, if some one would only invent a machine for setting type it would appear that the limit of mechanical printing had been reached. "But," he added,

"I do not suppose any one ever will."

Duvall smiled. "It doesn't seem possible, does it? But suppose we go up to the composing room and see what you

think of the changes there."

When they stepped into the large, airy room, with its enormous battery of something like fifty linotypes, Matthew stopped short in amazement—first at the unusual noise and then at sight of the great machines.

"What are they?" he finally managed to ask.

"Typesetting machines," replied Duvall, greatly enjoying Matthew's astonishment. "They have been in use more than twenty-five years."

"Is it possible?" was the only comment Matthew was

able to make, and for the next five minutes he was completely absorbed in the machines and their work.

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" he exclaimed, as he finally

tore himself away.

"And yet, how simple. Surely the world does move." In the editorial department Matthew was even more interested, although not so greatly surprised.

"Of course you have the Associated Press reports?" he asked as they seated themselves in Duvall's private office.

"Oh, yes; but we depend upon them only for routine news. We have our own private telegraph wires, cables and wireless to all parts of the civilized world."

"Remarkable," said Matthew. Then as he unfolded the paper he carried in his hand, "I do not see much telegraph

news here."

Duvall could not repress a smile as he replied by way of explanation: "We do not run it as telegraph. It is pretty hard to think of any news today which has not a New York end, and so we use nearly everything as local. With the exception of the capital cities of the world, New York is interested in very little outside of New York. We have everything here, so why go outside?"

For several minutes Matthew pondered over this state-

ment and then replied quizzically:

"From what I have seen the past two months, I should say there was considerable outside of New York. However, if you are satisfied with a little island ten miles square, so am I. That's just about the size of the one on which I live when I am home."

"Not so much brick and mortar," was Matthew's quick response, "but a great deal more happiness, I am sure."

"That depends," observed Morris, somewhat contemptuously, "upon what you call happiness. Solitude never had any attraction for me." "Then I would get out of New York at once," promptly suggested Matthew. "I cannot conceive of a more lonesome place. How many real, true friends do you think Simon had?"

Duvall and Morris exchanged glances. It was a question which needed no answer on their part. Evidently Matthew was nobody's fool, even though he did not know that greater New York extended above the Harlem River and took in pretty much all Long Island.

"I acquired a fair idea of the wireless coming up from Tonga on the steamboat," said Matthew, "but I must come around some day and watch those typesetting machines work. I wonder what Horace Greeley would say

if he could see them."

"I have no doubt that he would be just as greatly surprised as you are. Modern journalism is a tremendous

development," was Duvall's pacific rejoinder.

"A tremendous development along some lines," assented Matthew slowly, "but not in the character of the news. You continue to print the evil men do, rather than the good."

Duvall shrugged his shoulders. "Perhaps; but it is

what the public demands."

"I cannot believe it," replied Matthew with a little more emphasis. "I do not believe the public demands any such questionable matter as this attack upon a successful citizen like Alexander Bowen."

If a bomb had been dropped at Duvall's feet, it is

doubtful if he would have been any more surprised.

"Why-why-why," he stammered, "that would hardly come under the head of news. You certainly remember enough of American methods to understand that is politics."

"Politics!" ejaculated Matthew. "Do you call that

politics?"

"Certainly! We do not care for Bowen. He is not friendly to our interests. We do not believe that his appointment would be for the good of the nation and its finances. Mr. Morris suggested that it would be just as well to head him off."

The frown on Matthew's brow deepened as Duvall

proceeded.

"Head him off?" he finally exclaimed with great vehemence. "Head him off," and he pointed to the editorial in question. "I call this assassination—this attempt to destroy confidence in the head of a great banking institution, just because he doesn't happen to agree with your ideas. Is that the way Simon did?"

"Yes," replied Morris sharply. "Your brother allowed

no one to stand in his way. That was his policy."

Matthew's reticence vanished as his anger arose, and he

struck the desk sharply.

"It is an outrageous policy," he declared. "It was such attacks as this that killed Horace Greeley. No wonder Simon avowed himself a failure and left me to save his reputation. And I'll do it! Yes," starting suddenly to his feet. "I'll do it! I think I'll begin right here! Mr. Duvall, this statement must be denied."

While the command was addressed to Duvall, it was upon Morris that the blow fell hardest. His face became pallid and he clutched the arm of his chair with a death-like grip. He tried to speak, but his voice failed him. It was Duvall who first voiced the amazement Matthew's words had created.

"Denied?" he cried in consternation. "Denied? Impossible! It would kill the influence of the paper."

"Influence?" repeated Matthew. "Influence? Better

no influence than influence for evil."

"But this is not influence for evil," insisted Morris as he at last regained his voice. "It will harm no one to keep Bowen out of the cabinet. There are many men who would fill the position much better."

"That is not the point at issue," insisted Matthew. "You say in the *Planet* that business men have no confidence in Bowen. His success shows the statement to be a lie; and a lie is evil, no matter who utters it, or for what purpose."

"But there must be some reason for this slump in the

market," said Duvall.

"There is!" asserted Morris emphatically. "The slump in the market is due entirely to lack of confidence in Bowen. Mr. Brent," he continued impressively, "if you will come up to my office for just one hour, I shall be able to prove it to you."

Matthew regarded him for some moments in silence. "I have no desire to misjudge any one," he finally said much more mildly. "I'll admit I may be mistaken. If I am, I shall be glad to have you prove it to me. Let us go up to your office at once, Mr. Morris."

This time Matthew led the way to the elevator.

CHAPTER XIII

X THEN Matthew and Morris again entered the Simon Brent offices a great change had taken place in the conditions existing there. Instead of the quiet of the early morning hour, which had so impressed Matthew, there was about the place an atmosphere of electricallycharged activity and intense excitement.

In the outer offices half a dozen stenographers and typewriters were busy getting out telegrams and letters dictated to them by a corresponding number of men in their shirt sleeves, who were dividing their time between

stenographers, tickers and telephone booths.

Messenger and telegraph boys were running in and out, apparently with no definite object in view, although each

one appeared to know just what he was doing.

Even the bookkeepers seemed imbued with the same feverish energy, and Matthew and Morris had no sooner

entered than the latter was flooded with questions.

"Things seem to be pretty busy today," remarked Matthew as he stopped for a moment, while Morris glanced over the telegrams which one of the stenographers handed to him.

"Well, yes, passibly so," from Morris. "The flurry in

the market is causing us a little extra work."

Then as he led the way toward what was once Simon Brent's private office: "Suppose we go into your office, Mr. Brent. It will be more quiet and I shall be better able to explain to you what is going on."

"I expect you're right, Mr. Morris," replied Matthew

as they entered and he scated himself in his brother's big armchair. "The noise of all those clicking machines out there does upset one's thoughts, I reckon; however, you have become used to it."

"Oh, yes," and Morris stopped at the ticker and began

reading the tape.

"I remember when I was a boy and went to the district school," remarked Matthew reminiscently, as he leaned comfortably back in his chair, "we had a teacher one winter who never kept any order. When the selectmen took him to task about it, he explained that he was trying to educate boys and girls to work out in the world, not in a church. I guess you must have gone to the same teacher."

"What's that?" asked Morris, lifting his head, "I didn't hear what you were saying."

"I said I used to go to a teacher-"

Matthew's explanation was interrupted by the hasty entrance of a messenger boy with a telegram.

"Sign for it, Billy," said Morris as he tore open the

envelope and read it hastily.

"No bad news, is there?" asked Matthew solicitously observing the proceedings with an air of concern.

"Depends on what you call bad news," was the abrupt

reply.

Then to Billy, who slid a sheet of paper into the typewriter: "Take this telegram: Scott and Fiske; Chicago. Sell five thousand Atchison at ninety-four. Sign— Morris."

"Did you say ninety-four?" queried Billy as his fingers

flew over the keys.

"Yes," snapped Morris, "and no buyers at that. The bottom has simply dropped out of the stock market!"

"You don't say so!" ejaculated Matthew as he leaned eagerly forward over his desk. "And you think—"

"Just what I told you before," interrupted Morris. This entire situation has developed since Bowen was mentioned for the treasury."

Matthew's face expressed the concern he felt.

"And that isn't all," continued Morris. "The outlook is so bad that I determined last night we would either have to close our cotton mills, or reduce wages."

"My! My!" from Matthew, with still deeper concern.

"That is too bad? Which did you decide to do?"

"Reduce wages," replied Morris, still reading the tape. "We don't wish to throw the employes out of employment this cold weather."

"Quite right! Quite right!"

"I'm glad you think so, Mr. Brent; but," turning upon Matthew sharply, "what do you suppose was the result?"

"I'm sure I don't know. What?"

Morris extracted a telegram from a batch he carried and handed it to Matthew.

"What's this?" exclaimed the old man, as he slowly perused it. "Employes will strike if wages are reduced.' They must be crazy, this cold weather."

"They are, but they'll do it. And there's trouble in the

mines, too."

Matthew arose from his chair and slowly approached Morris. "The mines!" he exclaimed. "What mines?"

"Why, our mines, Mr. Brent. You knew your brother

had mines, didn't you?"

"Oh, yes. Arthur and Mary explained to me coming up on the boat that Simon owned mines and factories and railroads and other things; but I didn't suppose he had to manage them. I thought—well I don't know exactly what I did think, Mr. Morris."

"That is very evident," was Morris's sneering retort.
"If you want my real opinion, it is that you haven't thought at all.

Then, as Matthew made no reply, he continued: "You will find, Mr. Brent, that there are very few lines of industry in which your brother was not interested. I am afraid you are going to find the settling of his estate a pretty big undertaking."

The truth of the remark was so apparent, that Matthew plunged his hands into his pockets and stood with bowed head for several minutes, ere he replied: "I am afraid I shall; but I am here to do it, and do it I will.

Now what-"

His question was interrupted by another messenger boy and a couple of clerks, each with a matter for Morris's personal attention. No sooner had they left than the

telephone bell rang and other messengers entered.

Matthew tried his best to keep up with all that was going on around him; but about all he was able to accomplish was to keep out of the way of the procession of clerks and messengers, which continued to rush in and out of the office. Half a dozen times he tried to speak to Morris, but without avail. Finally he seated himself in his big armchair and silently watched the activity of which he was in the very midst and still had no part.

While thus engaged Duvall hastily entered.

"Here's a nice piece of news," he announced, approaching Morris.

"What's that?"

"The spinners at the Squantuck mills have struck."

"I expected it," declared Morris. "Additional proof—"

"Mr. Scannell, from the mayor's office," announced a

clerk, interrupting Morris.

"Who?" asked Morris turning sharply.

"Mr. Scannell. The mayor's private secretary."

"Tell him to wait until after luncheon. I'm too busy now to bother with city officials."

He turned back to Duvall. "No, I'm not surprised at the strike. It is simply another proof of lack of confidence in Bowen. What do the spinners want?"

"The old scale."

"How much is that?" Matthew finally managed to ask as he leaned forward over his desk.

"Fifty cents an hour," replied Morris. "How have you handled the news, Duvall?"

"Ran out an 'Extra' and laid the whole trouble to

Bowen."

"Good!" was the approving reply.

"It looks very bad to me," interrupted Matthew, rising to his feet. "Very bad! What influence could Bowen's appointment possibly have upon conditions at a cotton mill?"

Both Morris and Duvall cast upon him pitying glances, while Morris opened and read another bunch of telegrams.

In the meantime Duvall answered Matthew's question by saying: "I am afraid you do not understand the conditions of the day, Mr. Brent. The mention of Bowen for the treasury portfolio seems to have frightened the financial world. This condition is bound to effect the markets. A wage reduction is announced and the men, seeing only one side, strike. So you perceive the whole trouble is traceable to Bowen."

"Yes," insisted Morris, "and the situation is getting worse. Read that," and he tossed a telegram over to Duvall who read it slowly while Matthew eyed him expectantly.

"Bad! Bad!" said Duvall handing the message back to Morris without enlightening Matthew as to its

purport.

"I should say so! And look at this!"

He held out the tape which was slowly unwinding. Matthew tried to look, but could not see anything because of Duvall, who took the tape in his hand and read: "General Electric, one fifty. Why," he exclaimed, "that's a decline of nine points since the opening."

"Exactly," replied Morris, "and I predict it will go

to forty."

Duvall uttered an exclamation of consternation. "That

would mean a panic," he declared.

"A panic?" repeated Matthew in great excitement. "You don't mean it? I remember the panic of fifty-nine and I wouldn't want anything like that to happen again."

"It surely will," said Morris, "unless Bowen's name is withdrawn. Here, listen to this," and he read from the

tape:

"Taylor and Brown announce their inability to carry out their contracts. That's the first failure, and there will be more."

Matthew shook his head slowly. "And you really think the possibility of Bowen's appointment is the cause?" he asked.

"Undoubtedly."

Matthew unbuttoned his coat and ran his hands through his hair.

"It may be," he finally said. "I'll admit I am not

much of a financier and-"

"It is just as Mr. Duvall explained," interrupted Morris. "Money is very sensitive."

Matthew shrugged his shoulders. "Mine always has been," he said grimly, "but I always laid its timidity to its smallness. Small people-"

"You must begin to see, Mr. Brent," continued Morris without paying any attention to the old man's jocularity, "that the Planet was right. I think you will make a great mistake if you attempt to interfere."

Matthew drew a long breath. "Maybe, maybe," he sighed. "I'll admit I am not thoroughly posted-," and he paused reflectively. "But I had hoped to have some

one here who was. I had hoped-"

Even as he spoke the outer door opened and Arthur Durham entered. No sooner did Matthew catch sight of him than he advanced to meet him.

"My dear boy," he exclaimed as he extended both hands, "I surely am glad to see you. I was just telling

Mr. Morris that I had hoped-"

"Excuse me," Durham interrupted as he drew back and regarded Matthew suspiciously. "You have the advantage. I don't believe I have had the honor of meeting you."

"What!" stammered Matthew. "You don't know me.

Well, as Horace Greeley would say-"

"Mr. Brent!" exclaimed Durham, as he seized both the outstretched hands. "What have you been doing to

yourself? Where are your whiskers?"

"Well, well, I declare!" ejaculated Matthew. "In the excitement of business I clean forgot about the whiskers," and he threw back his head and laughed heartily, while Morris and Duvall regarded the pair with looks of astonishment.

"Your own granddaughter wouldn't know declared Durham.

"You're right about that," laughed Matthew.

didn't; but how do you like my looks?"
"Immensely. It's a wonderful improvement. I wouldn't have believed it." Then as Matthew subsided into a chuckle: "I am sorry I was so late; but I got mixed up in the flurry-"

"So did I," interrupted Matthew, "and I'm not unmixed yet. I was hoping you would come in and straighten me out. You know," he added confidentially, "I never would have undertaken this job if you hadn't promised to help me. I need help right now."

"Well," laughing, "here I am. What can I do?"

"Of course you understand all about the flurry?"

"I should say I did," replied Durham. "The bottom

has simply dropped out of the market."

"That is just what we have been trying to explain to Mr. Brent," Morris interjected, "but he still thinks there is no lack of confidence—"

"I didn't say that," quickly interrupted Matthew. "I said I didn't know; but Mr. Durham does and he will tell us all about it—won't you Arthur?"

"I should say so. If we hadn't been strong in our industrials, we should be in a pretty mess."

"What do you mean?" queried Matthew.

"I mean we should have gone to the wall; that's what I mean."

"Just as I told Mr. Brent," said Duvall. "Anybody at all familiar with financial affairs can see what a serious matter this lack of confidence in Bowen is becoming."

"Lack of confidence in Bowen!" exclaimed Durham in

surprise.

"Exactly," replied Morris. "The whole trouble is lack of confidence in Bowen," and he turned to leave the office.

Durham started forward: "That is not so, Mr. Morris," he said emphatically, "and you know it!"

"What!" And Morris wheeled upon him fiercely. "Do

you mean-?"

"I mean just what I say!" interrupted Durham. "The trouble is not due to lack of confidence in Bowen and you know it."

"Then what is the trouble?" asked Matthew impa-

tiently. "What is the trouble, Arthur?"

"The trouble is," replied Arthur fixing his eyes steadfastly upon Morris, "that the Simon Brent estate has called in its loans and then—with money in the most urgent demand—has dumped enough high class securities on the market to create panic prices. That's the trouble, Mr. Brent, and Mr. Morris knows it."

While Durham had been speaking the expression on Matthew's face had changed from bewilderment to one of quick understanding. The explanation was so plain that, although he had been out of the world for half a century, he could not fail to see its correctness. For a minute or more he was silent. Then he said in a stern voice:

"You have heard what Mr. Durham says, Mr. Morris.

Is the statement true?"

"Partially, but-"

"Why did you do it?" insisted Matthew without waiting for any further explanations.

"Because," answered Morris defiantly, "I have no con-

fidence in Bowen. He is not fit for the place."

"Oh, you have no confidence!" exclaimed Matthew. "I see. Perhaps you prefer someone else?"

Morris started: "I could name several if I had to,

but-"

"Bowen has nothing to do with it," reiterated Durham. "It is just an effort to run a big corner."

Morris turned upon him with an impatient gesture.

"You are most too young a man," he said insolently, "to oppose your opinions to one of the oldest men on the street. You may convince a man from the other side of the world that you are right; but with others your opinion will carry little weight. I know whereof I speak and I tell you this demoralization of the market is due entirely to lack of confidence in Bowen."

"Lack of confidence by whom?" insisted Durham.

"Why, by Mr. Morris," replied Matthew. "Didn't you just hear him say so?"

Morris bit his lip while Matthew, rubbing his smooth chin continued slowly: "As Horace Greeley would say—

I begin to see the nigger in the woodpile." Then still more slowly: "How would it do, Arthur, if we should offer to buy a few good securities? Isn't that the usual—"

"What?" interrupted Morris turning fiercely upon

Matthew. "Buy?"

"That's what I said, Mr. Morris—buy," and Matthew looked him squarely in the eye. "What do you think, Arthur?"

"I think it would be a great help." Then, as an after thought: "And you might be able to make a few dollars besides."

Matthew started. "I had not thought of that," he said as he slowly nodded his head. "That is certainly a great obstacle. I never believed in making money in that way."

For several minutes he pondered deeply.

"Yes," he finally repeated, "I do not like to make money in that way; but it would help to avert a panic—"

"Mr. Brent," interrupted Morris, "we are not in a position to buy."

"How about those called loans?" quickly queried

Durham.

"Yes, Mr. Morris," echoed Matthew, "how about those called loans? How much do they amount to?"

"Very little," was the curt response. "Not more than

eight or ten million dollars."

Matthew's face grew pale and he grasped the desk for support.

"What?" he fairly shouted. "Ten million dollars in

cash? Ten million dollars to put in the bank?"

"More or less," snapped Morris.

For a moment it seemed as if the aged man would succumb to the shock of the information. Durham stepped quickly forward to support him. In an instant, however, he regained his equilibrium and motioned the young man away as he exclaimed in a hoarse voice:

"Ten million dollars to be doing no one any good!

Infamous! Infamous!"

Then straightening himself to his full height he waved his arms excitedly as he commanded:

"Loan it! Spend it! Give it away! Anything to get

it into circulation!"

CHAPTER XIV

TO DESCRIBE the expression on the faces of Morris and Duvall at Matthew's outburst would be impossible. They regarded each other in the utmost surprise, Duvall remarking under his breath:

"The man is insane. He ought to be confined."

The sentiment was silently, but unquestionably endorsed, not only by Morris, but by Billy, who stood with wide-opened mouth and eyes, unable to account for such sentiment.

The only one not affected by the outburst was Durham, whose few weeks acquaintance with Matthew had

put him into a position to understand his views.

"I think, Mr. Brent," he finally said, "if you would simply offer to re-loan the money at a fair rate, cancel the selling orders, and issue buying orders all along the line, it would be sufficient for the present. It is not easy to hand out ten million dollars where they would bring about the best results."

Matthew regarded the speaker earnestly for several

minutes.

"I expect you're right," he finally said. "Yes, that's what we'll do."

Turning to Morris who stood glaring at Durham he said: "Will you please give orders to that effect, Mr. Morris."

"No, sir!" replied Morris angrily. "I will not. It would be madness."

"What?" exclaimed Matthew in manner that reminded Durham of the stand the old man had taken in regard to the Portuguese sailor. "You refuse to do as I tell you? Don't you know I am in command here?"

"If you are not, you soon will be," admitted Morris with a snarl; "and if you want to give such orders, you

may. I will not."

For just a moment Matthew glanced from one to another of those present. Then turning to the desk, with grim determination he hastily picked up the telephone.

"I have never had the nerve to tackle this thing before," he said to Durham, "but now the time has come." Then as he heard the operator's voice in his ear asking: "What number?" he replied, "I don't want any number. I want the bank that's got our ten million dollars. Huh? How do I know the number? I'm Matthew Brent. Oh, you know me, do you? That's good; but I don't remember your voice. Maybe, if I could see you—oh, you're Miss Bright, the operator. Glad to meet you, Miss Bright. Say, do you know where our ten million dollars is—"

"Mr. Brent," interrupted Morris, "you're making a

fool of yourself."

"What's that?" exclaimed Matthew still holding the phone to his mouth, "a fool! I want you to understand—" Then as the operator's voice came again to his ear: "No, no, not you, Miss Bright! Not you!"

In spite of the seriousness of the situation Durham was so convulsed with laughter that he was unable to control himself. At this point, however, he touched Matthew on

the shoulder.

"That's only the telephone girl, Mr. Brent," he explained. "She doesn't know anything about the business."

"What? She talked as though she did."

"They all do that!" declared Billy, who had been an interested auditor.

Matthew turned upon them a knowing look as he slowly replaced the telephone on the desk.

"O course, Arthur, if you say so, you know; but there

must be some way of getting this order issued."

"There is, Mr. Brent, and if no one else will give the order for you, I will. I am sure, however," he added, with a significant glance at the would-be cabinet officer, "that if Mr. Morris will stop to consider the matter for a moment, he will think better of it. He surely wouldn't want the Street talking office secrets."

Morris's face flushed and his hands clutched convulsively, although he replied in a comparatively calm voice:

"I suppose if Mr. Brent has made up his mind to throw away his money, the sooner it is done the better. I'll give the order," and he quitted the room followed by Duvall.

"Now, then," said Matthew to Durham as they were left alone in the office, "what else can we do to straighten this out?" He pulled off his coat and threw it upon the desk. "It's hot work, I can see; but if I have got to manage this business, the sooner I begin the better. Could I send a telegram?"

"Sure," replied Durham, as he busied himself at the

ticker. "Give it to Billy."

"I will, but I haven't written it yet."

"I'll write it on the machine," said Billy.

"Oh, yes; I hadn't thought of that." Then, as he pulled up his sleeves:

"Just say," began Matthew slowly, "that the-"

"Who is it to?" interrupted Billy.

"Certainly. I beg your pardon. I forgot. It is to our mills at Squantuck."

Billy gave the typewriter a few swift strokes.

"Say," again began Matthew, "say—say—Superintendent of Squantuck Mills." He paused reflectively.

"Yes," he continued, "Superintendent of the Squantuck

Cotton Mills—Have you got that down?"

"Here you are, Mr. Brent," interrupted Durham. "Evidently your first order has been received. The money market has eased off three-fourths of a cent."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Matthew, crossing over from the typewriter to the ticker. "Let's see! and he looked over Durham's shoulder with great eagerness.

"There it is," said Durham showing him the tape.

"Call money two and one-half."

Matthew ran his hands through his hair reflectively. "That's better, I suppose. Still it seems high. You really think it will help, do you?"

"It surely will," and Durham watched the unwinding

tape, while Matthew resumed his dictation.

"Let's see," he said, "where was I? Oh, yes, Superintendent of the Squantuck Cotton Mills:—" He untied his neckties. "It's mighty warm here, William. Can't you cool it off a little? Where's the stove?"

"There ain't no stove," laughed Billy. "It's steam."

"Great Scott, you don't say so. Well! Well! Let's see. Where was I again?"

"You got as far as the Squantuck Mills."

"Here it comes, Mr. Brent," again interrupted Durham. "Pennsylvania one fifteen. General Electric one forty-five." Then suddenly: "By George, it's General Electric he's after."

Matthew again crossed hurriedly to the ticker as a messenger opened the door.

"Message for Mr. Morris," sang out the boy.

Matthew turned from the ticker.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Message for Mr. Morris."

"Give it to me. I'm Mr. Morris right now."

The boy handed him the telegram and disappeared,

while Matthew slowly opened and read: "Have wired Washington. Keep it up. Gage."

"Gage," repeated Matthew, "Gage. That's the man

I met here this morning, wasn't it, William?"

"Yes, sir."

Slowly Matthew reread the telegram.

"Well," declared Matthew, "I don't know what it

means. Let's finish our telegram."

As Billy again prepared to write, Morris re-entered the office and stopped in astonishment at Matthew's disheveled appearance.

"Have you fixed it, Mr. Morris?" inquired Matthew.

"If that's what you call it," was the surly reply.

"Cancelled all selling orders?"

"Yes, sir."

"Loaned all the ten million dollars?"

"I have given orders to that effect."

"Well, then," and he handed Morris the telegram, "you'd better attend to this. I don't know what it means," and once more Matthew turned to the typewriter.

Morris glanced hastily at the message and without a word crumpled it in his hand. As he turned to leave the office with a look of hatred on his face, Matthew remarked

to Billy:

"Now, then, William, I'm going to finish this telegram. Superintendent of the Squantuck Cotton Mills: Tell the men that we have decided to restore the old scale of wages. Wait. Say we have decided to do better than that. We have decided to increase the wages ten percent."

"Preposterous!" exclaimed Morris, who had stopped in

the doorway when Matthew began to dictate.

Matthew turning upon him fiercely:

"What? Preposterous—with all that ten million lying around loose?" Then, as Morris disappeared: "William, read me what I have said."

"Superintendent, Squantuck Cotton Mills: Announce increase of ten percent over old scale. (Signed) Matthew Brent."

Matthew looked at him in surprise: "Is that all I said?" "Yes, sir."

"I thought I said more than that."

"That's all that counted," declared Billy, as he pulled the paper from the machine with a flourish and left the office.

"He's right," said Durham, as Matthew stood in the middle of the floor looking after Billy in mild surprise.

Matthew turned at the sound of Durham's voice and

approached the ticker.

"What's the next thing?" he asked, wiping his forehead. "Oh, yes, William," as Billy reentered the office. "Call up Mr. Duvall and tell him I want to see him right away." Then to Durham: "How's the market now?"

"Better. Listen to this," and Durham read from the tape: "Pennsylvania one twenty-two, General Electric one forty-four—the market's getting stronger—Western Union seventy-eight." Again, after a pause; "Pennsylvania one twenty-seven asked, one twenty-six bid; General Electric one fifty-two asked, one fifty bid—that's the end of the corner, Mr. Brent."

"I don't believe it was a corner," declared Matthew, as he rubbed his hands together in his excitement. "In fact I am sure it wasn't. I just don't exactly understand this financial-political game, but I think this flurry in the market is in some way or other connected with the Bowen appointment. You feel sure that the flurry is over, do you?"

"It looks so," turning from the tape, "and, in addition we've probably cleaned up fifty or sixty thousand

dollars."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Matthew in surprise,

as he again rubbed his hands together. "Well, well, that wasn't so bad for my first morning's work," and he felt of the place where his beard had formerly been.

"But of course," continued Durham in an amused

tone, "you didn't want to make it."

"Of course I did not—but," Matthew paused reflectively and scratched his chin.

"But in order to restore confidence," suggested

Durham.

"That's it exactly; to restore confidence—you think confidence is restored, don't you?"

"Practically."

"And that the lack of confidence was not in Bowen?"

"Absolutely. It was simply a trick of Morris's to squeeze the Street."

Matthew again scratched his chin. "That or some-

thing worse, I think-"

He was interrupted by the entrance of Duvall.

"You sent for me, Mr. Brent?" with a shade of annoyance in his tone.

"Yes, sir, I did. I want to tell you that my mind regarding the position of the *Planet* on this Bowen appointment is made up. In the next edition you will say there is every reason to believe that the appointment of Alexander Bowen to the portfolio of the treasury will be perfectly satisfactory to the—the—what's the word, Arthur?"

"You mean the financial interests."

"Yes, that's it; to the financial interests. You think it will be, don't you, Arthur?"

"Perfectly."

"But, Mr. Brent," began Duvall.

"We'll have no buts," declared Matthew positively. "We're a part of the financial interests, are we not?" again turning to Durham.

"A good big part," was the laughing rejoinder.

"So I begin to think," declared Matthew quizzically, "and we're well satisfied."

"But, Mr. Brent," insisted Duvall.

Matthew turned on him a look which was too much like his brother Simon's to be be misunderstood.

"There's no chance for an argument, Mr. Duvall. See that this statement gets into the next edition—if you value your position. Good morning, sir."

Without a word Duvall left the room while Matthew

threw himself into his big armchair.

"Well, well," he exclaimed with a deep sigh of relief as he pulled out his handkerchief and wiped his forehead,

"this is somewhat different from Tonga."

The familiar name awoke a train of thoughts, and his mind sped across the Pacific to his island home. Slowly he sank back in his chair and the hand which crumpled his handkerchief became motionless and dropped silently to the desk.

"Tonga!" he mused softly. "I wonder if they miss me."

His eyes closed and for some moments he sat in quiet reverie, while Durham stood reading to himself the figures reeled off by the ceaseless ticker.

From his delightful day-dream the old man was suddenly awakened by Gilson Gage. He burst into the room like a cyclone and in a towering rage demanded: "Where's Morris?"

So unexpected the interruption that Matthew sprang to his feet with a startled expression upon his face, exclaiming in a voice intended to be severe, but which plainly indicated his alarm:

"What's the matter? What's happened now?"

CHAPTER XV

THE appearance of Gilson Gage as he stood in the doorway was that of a man prepared to do some desperate deed.

"Where's Morris?" he again demanded, ignoring

Matthew's question.

"Were you speaking to me?" asked Durham, slowly

raising his eyes.

"I am speaking to anyone who can answer." Then as he advanced fiercely toward Matthew: "Do you know where Morris is?"

"Oh, he's around somewhere," was the rejoinder as Matthew slowly resumed his composure and his seat. "As

Horace Greeley used to say-"

"Bah!" exclaimed Gage as he turned angrily away. "You're a back number." Then to Billy, who was trying his best to appear busy at the typewriter: "Tell Morris I want to see him."

Billy was saved the trouble of either obeying or refusing to obey by the entrance of Morris, who came into

the room with both hands full of papers.

Gage approached him angrily and with clenched hands. "What are you trying to do?" he asked. "What does all this mean?"

"Don't ask me," was the savage retort.

"Of course, I'll ask you. Who else should I ask? Here I start to carry out our agreement, and before the first wire can reach Washington, the whole condition changes.

You can't play politics that way. What does it mean, I say?"

At the word Washington, Matthew pricked up his ears. "Oho!" he said to himself, "So that was the Washington referred to in the telegram! No wonder William didn't know."

"What does it mean, Morris?" again demanded Gage sharply.

"I tell you, I don't know," replied Morris.

"Well, I've got to know. We don't get a chance to name a cabinet officer every day. This is no child's play."

Morris shrugged his shoulders. "I know that," he ejaculated, "but there's a child playing it."

The other men came toward him as one. "Do you

mean me?" they exclaimed in unison.

"I mean the man who is responsible for these orders, whoever he is," retorted Morris.

For a moment the four stood glaring at one another.

The tension was broken by a telegraph messenger who entered hastily, exclaiming: "Telegram for Gilson Gage."

Gage took the envelope from the boy's hand and tore

it open.

"It's from the private secretary of the presidentelect," he exclaimed as he read it to Morris. "He wires: 'What's the matter with Bowen? He looks good to me.'"

"And he looks good to me!" declared Matthew, striking his right fist into the palm of his left hand. "He looks good to me, too."

"What do you know about it?" demanded Gage, turn-

ing fiercely upon him.

"I know enough to know he's a good man," was Mat-

thew's emphatic reply.

Gage shrugged his shoulders. "What's that got to do with it?" he asked. "We've decided upon someone else."

"We?" exclaimed Durham. "I was informed that the financial interests had agreed upon Bowen."

"Oh, you were?" snapped Gage. "Well, we've changed

our minds."

"We?" queried Matthew. "Who's we?"

"Well, Morris and I, if you want to know."

For a moment Matthew regarded the pair in surprise. Then he broke out vehemently: "Are you and Mr. Morris selecting a secretary of the treasury for the whole United States?"

"Yes. Have you any objections?"

Matthew was about to reply, but Durham interrupted: "It is very simple, Mr. Brent. The financial interests have been promised that they should have a voice in naming the secretary of the treasury for the incoming administration. Gage and Morris practically rule the Street."

Matthew regarded him in the utmost surprise. that so?" he asked. "Is that so?"

"Well, practically. The Simon Brent estate rules the Street, and this at present seems to be Mr. Morris."

Matthew nodded his head reflectively.

"Uh huh!" he said under his breath. Aloud he asked: "Was this Simon's method of doing business?"

"So they say," laughed Durham.

Again Matthew nodded his head, while Morris exclaimed angrily: "Mr. Brent, this is a matter entirely too big for you. You're an old man and have lived away from America for years. You know nothing about my present day methods. If you will leave the matter in my hands-"

"Never!" interrupted Matthew vehemently. "Never! I may be an old man and a back number, but I begin to see the power my brother wielded. If the Simon Brent estate is to name the new secretary of the treasury, I'll

take a hand in it."

"What?" exclaimed the other three, "you'll take a hand in it?"

"Yes. Have you any objections?" and he thrust his thumbs in the armholes of his vest, and regarded Gage in a manner which said plainly: "The head of the Brent

house has made up his mind."

Gage attempted to speak, but Matthew cut him short. "Yes," he continued. "I have decided to take a hand in this; and if I have any influence, the name of the new secretary of the treasury will be Alexander Bowen." Then after a pause: "But what I don't see, Arthur, is this. How is it possible for Simon, or his estate to do this? What is the power by which he was not only able to control the financial world, but to influence the government as well?"

"Why," replied Durham, "the power of money, to be sure."

"Yes, yes," declared Matthew hastily. "I know that money is a power; but it is not vested in any one man."

The other three exchanged significant glances, which impelled Matthew to ask: "By the way, Mr. Morris, what is the value of my brother's estate?"

Morris shrugged his shoulders. "I can't tell you."

"Can't tell me? Why not? Why not? I have a right to know!"

"No one knows," declared Morris. "He didn't know himself. Several hundred million. With the money he controls for others, it may be a billion."

For the second time that morning, Matthew's face blanched and he grasped the back of a chair for support.

"A billion dollars!" he gasped. "A billion dollars!"

He bowed his head and stood a trembling figure, as Mary entered.

"Poor Simon!" he muttered. "Poor Simon!" What

crimes he must have committed!"

"Crimes!" exclaimed all who heard him, while Mary sprang forward and grasped him by the arm.

"Daddy!" she exclaimed. "What are you saying?

Who do you mean?"

"Your Uncle Simon! What a criminal he must have been!" and his voice became more sorrowful with each word. "No man could honestly make that sum in a lifetime, and Simon started without a cent."

Gage turned away with a look of deep disgust upon his face, while Morris with an emphatic gesture exclaimed:

"I told you, Mr. Brent, that you didn't understand modern business methods, nor their magnitude; and you don't."

"No, thank God, I don't!" replied Matthew unable to conceal his emotion; "and I don't want to—if you call such methods as these business."

Then to a messenger who entered the door at that moment with a handful of telegrams: "Take them away! Take them away! We don't want them!"

"But the estate must be looked after, Mr. Brent," said Durham stepping forward and taking the telegrams.

Matthew regarded him thoughtfully. "Yes," he finally

said, "and I must look after it."

For several moments longer he pondered deeply. When he spoke again it was with an air of settled determination.

"William," he said, "ask Mr. Duvall to come up here at once, and then tell them whoever is at the other end of that," indicating the telephone, "to put it out of business."

Billy obeyed while the others regarded Matthew in

silence.

"Now," he continued after his order had been executed, "lock that door," and he pointed to the door leading into the hall.

Before Billy could carry out the command, Gage turned impetuously upon the old man:

"You will have to excuse me, Mr. Brent," he said, "but I have business with the outside world and cannot be cut off from it in this fashion. Morris, I see you are out of it."

He took several steps toward the door and then turned back into the room.

"Before I go, Mr. Brent," he continued more calmly, "I think I am entitled to know what you propose to do."

Matthew regarded him steadfastly for several minutes

before he replied—carefully weighing each word.

"Yes, I think you are and I am sorry I cannot tell you—except that I am going to carry out my brother's instructions as left in his will. These instructions were to divide his estate, and he said that I could do it—how, he did not suggest, nor have I yet decided; but I can see, as did Simon, that it must be divided.

"Because of the power vested in such vast wealth, this estate has become a menace to the nation. I thank the wisdom of the law-makers, that the inheritance tax will make the first division. This, however, will be but a small percentage, and the great task will still devolve upon me."

"If that was your brother's idea, why did he not

divide it himself?"

"Simon did not know how to divide. He only knew how to multiply. For years he did this, until his vast accumulation became a veritable part of him. To have divided it would have been to vivisect his own body—to tear out his vitals and scatter them to the winds. He simply could not do it, and so he left to me the accomplishment of this stupendous task. How I am to do it, I cannot say; but do it I must and will."

A long pause followed Matthew's dramatic speech. To Mary his utterance seemed inspired, and she regarded her grandfather with mingled awe and admiration. To the others the idea was simply incomprehensible and his words those of a fanatic.

Gage was the first to break the silence.

"Mr. Brent," he said earnestly, "let me give you a word of advice. Be careful that in trying to remedy what you consider one evil, you do not create a greater. The established order of things can not be easily set aside. Good morning," and he hastily quitted the room.

There was silence until Matthew voiced his thoughts.

"Is it possible," he asked, "that we have created a power we cannot control—an evil power which cannot be destroyed? I cannot—I will not believe it!"

Again there was silence, broken only by the stock-ticker, whose clamorous voice slowly aroused the aged man to action. For a moment he raised his eyes and regarded the instrument thoughtfully. Then in a stern voice he commanded:

"William, take that thing out of here! It is responsible for this evil—that and what it stands for. Take it away, I say! Take it away!"

"I-I-I can't, sir," stammered Billy. "It's held down

by wires."

Matthew strode forward and grasped the tape which

was falling into the basket.

"Held down by wires!" he repeated angrily. "Yes, the wires of greed, controlling the destiny of the world; but shall we admit our inability to sever them?"

He dashed the tape into the basket.

"If there is no one else," he declared, "I will be the instrument of the Almighty to sever the meshes that

entangle my brother's honor!"

With the energy of his excitement, he wrenched the ticker from its pedestal and hurled it to the floor. Standing over its scattered remains as Ajax might have stood defying the lightning, he cried:

"Now are we no longer puppets, dancing at the end of a gilded wire, but men—men free to administer the affairs of this vast estate like human beings with souls!"

He re-crossed the room and stood calmly beside his great armchair. Raising his right hand to command the undivided attention of those present he said quietly but firmly:

"Now, gentlemen, let us discuss this matter in a spirit of brotherly love."

CHAPTER XVI

THE conference which followed was participated in by Matthew, Morris, Duvall and Durham, with

Mary an interested auditor.

"I have been much perplexed," was Matthew's opening statement, "by the unusual wording of the explanatory note in Simon's will. He named but one heir—my granddaughter Mary—and still he declares that I am better able to divide the estate than he. In the will proper, he refers to Mary as the 'residuary legatee.' He must, therefore, have expected and intended a division, or there could have been no residue."

"He may have intended the term 'residuary,' " suggested Duvall, "to have referred to the residue of the estate after the inheritance tax and other indebtedness had been paid."

"Possibly," admitted Matthew, "but I hardly think so. Just what he did mean has not been clear to me until today, when I learn of the immensity of his estate and the danger that lurks therein. Now I perceive that he fully realized that this vast structure must be demolished, or it would become even a greater menace than it is. It has come to me as an inspiration."

"Do you think you would have had this inspiration had it not been in accord with your theories?" queried Duvall. "Do you think it could have come to your brother?"

"I do not, although I am sure he had begun to see the

necessity for it."

"If such had been the case, don't you think he would

have intimated how he thought it might best be done?"

Matthew shook his head as he replied slowly and with deep conviction: "I do not. Although he realized the need, he did not even know where to begin. He had been reading my books and knew how I regarded the accumulation of vast wealth-knew that I looked upon it as a menace to society. In our youth we disagreed; but after he became older and began to understand my viewpoint, he must have seen that I was right. He virtually told Mary so.

"However, this great fortune has been amassed, and the question which must have presented itself was how it could best be distributed. Simon did not know. This is the problem he has left me to work out. This is the problem I must solve. How, I have not determined; but in some manner that shall enable me, at least in part, to make restitution to those from whom this wealth has been unjustly taken and to those whose labor must have been unjustly used in its accumulation. No man could honestly amass such a fortune in fifty years. Most of it must have been stolen."

"No, no, Mr. Brent!" interposed Duvall earnestly, "it was not stolen. It may not have been acquired in accordance with your ideas; but Simon Brent was a lawabiding man."

"Law-abiding, yes," retorted Matthew, "for if the laws were not such as would warrant his actions, he had laws

passed that would."

"Again I must disagree with you," Duvall replied, "I do not believe your brother ever used his influence for the passing of a law which was not wise and just to the business--"

Matthew shook his head vigorously. "I do not believe you are qualified to judge, Mr. Duvall. The manner in which you conduct the Planet convinces me."

Duvall's face flushed, for Duvall was an upright man. His management of the *Planet* was along what he considered the most up-to-date lines and he honestly supported only those public measures which to him seemed good. If his viewpoint was wrong, it was not because he so desired, but because of his training and environment. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that he should have replied very forcibly—even at the risk of not pleasing one who was to be his superior:

"The manner in which I conduct the *Planet*, Mr. Brent, is, in my judgment, honest and right. Its policy under my managment has always been to support those measures which seemed best for the great business and financial interests of the nation. As the stability of the nation depends largely upon these interests, whatever helps them must benefit the public at large. If you do not consider my management of the highest order, I shall be pleased

to tender my resignation."

"No, no!" replied Matthew hastily. "I am not questioning the honesty of your motives; only your viewpoint.

I cannot see matters as you do."

"It is because your viewpoint is limited, Mr. Brent," Morris here interposed. "You are unable to comprehend the immense volume of business done in these offices. It amounts to hundreds of thousands, frequently millions of dollars, daily. It is just as much larger than the amount of business done in your day, as the business of the great department stores, whose sales amount to thousands of dollars daily, is greater than that of the country merchant, whose daily sales are not more than a hundred. The small merchant could never acquire a million dollars from his merchandising. The great department store—which clears, perhaps, a smaller percentage on most of its sales than does the small merchant—might easily and honestly make that sum in a few months."

"But there are not stores which sell thousands of dollars worth of goods daily," declared Matthew. "You simply mention these large sums as illustrations. Why, even A. T. Stewart doesn't do that amount of business."

"Perhaps A. T. Stewart did not," replied Morris, "but the establishment which occupies not only Stewart's old

store, but several other much larger stores, does."

"Impossible!"

"Not at all, Mr. Brent. The only impossibility is that you are unable to grasp the situation after fifty years of retirement. If you will take three months to become acquainted with the world of today and its methods, allowing me in the meantime to manage the estate—"

"What?" interrupted Matthew. "Leave you in charge of the estate after what I have learned today. Never!"

Morris's face flushed. "I am sorry you misjudge me," he said controlling his temper as best he could. "I have nothing personally against Mr. Bowen, but I shall maintain my position that he is not the right man for the place. I firmly believe his policy will be bad for the financial interests, and the Brent estate will lose thereby."

Matthew listened patiently to all the arguments advanced, but they made no impression upon him. When the discussion ended he had not changed his determination. However, at Durham's suggestion that he could not legally take any action until the will had been admitted to probate and he had been confirmed as executor by the courts, he agreed to allow the business to continue as usual for a few days, upon one absolute condition, namely, that no loans should be called and no new deals made.

While Mary had been only an interested listener and had said nothing, her year's experience in New York and her daily intercourse with Simon had so shaped her view of the world that she was able to see that her grandfather might be mistaken in many particulars. Her

loyalty to him, however, was unshaken, and she was perfectly willing to abide by his decision, satisfied that in some manner he would confirm the confidence that had been reposed in him by Simon. The only thing which caused her any doubt in her grandfather was her faith in Durham, whose familiarity with financial affairs was well known, while Matthew admitted that he had had little or no experience.

On their way home in the automobile she said diplo-

matically:

"Uncle Simon had great confidence in Arthur, Daddy. He understands a lot about the business, you must let him

help you all he can."

"Oh, I shall," he replied. "I have already done so and he helped me out of a tight place this morning. He understands the details of the business thoroughly; but he has not that broad grasp upon social conditions I wish he had. I am considerably disappointed in him."

"Why, Daddy!" and Mary regarded her grandfather in the utmost surprise. "There isn't any one in the city who is better informed socially than Arthur."

"You don't understand me, Mary. I do not refer to that sort of social conditions. I mean matters of social

economy."

"He's just as economical as he can be. Mrs. Durham told me so. She says she doesn't believe there is another young man in New York who spends so little on himself. You see you are much mistaken."

Matthew smiled as he replied grimly: "I must be."

"Then don't you think that maybe-I don't say for sure, but just maybe—it will be better to be guided a

little by his advice?"

Matthew did not reply, the rapid movement of the auto, as it dodged in and out among the crowd of vehicles, proving a somewhat disturbing factor; but when they were finally skimming out Riverside Drive and Mary again reverted to the matter, he replied very earnestly:

"Mary, this is not a matter in which I can take anyone's advice. If Simon had wanted Arthur or Morris,
or anyone else to have administered his estate, they were
right here and he would have named them. Instead, he
selected me. I have come fifteen thousand miles to carry
out his wishes and I must do it. Of course I shall be
glad to consult with Arthur as to details; but nothing
can change me from my purpose."

CHAPTER XVII

K NOWING her grandfather as she did, Mary was in a quandary.

Likewise she remembered the scene in Tonga when Matthew and Durham had clashed over her future. At that time Matthew had yielded because of his affection for her. This seemed a vastly different situation, as it had to do with the theory upon which her grandfather had lived his life.

"However," she thought, "Arthur showed great wis-

dom then and he will be just as wise now."

It was with considerable impatience, therefore, that she awaited the coming of Durham that evening. In as few words as possible she told him of her conversation with Matthew and asked his advice.

For some moments Durham did not reply. When he did it was with an earnestness greater than he had ever

spoken before.

"Since the events of today," he said slowly, "I have given the matter much thought. I have learned enough of your grandfather's character to perceive that a serious condition exists—a condition fraught with grave consequences to many persons. I have gone so far as to confer with Judge Everett, your uncle's lawyer, to see if there is any way of preventing the thing your grandfather has in mind. He says there is not, without such steps, being taken as I am sure you would not wish. I—"

"Then what can we do?" interrupted Mary with the

greatest concern. "Oh, Arthur, what can we do?"

For a long minute there was silence. Then Arthur exclaimed impulsively: "Mary, do you believe the Bible?" "Why, of course! What a question!"

"Do you think it tells about a wisdom higher than our wisdom?"

Mary regarded him in surprise. "You mean God's?"

she finally asked. Durham nodded his head.

"Then I am sure Daddy will have wisdom," was the joyful exclamation. "He says he is always guided by God."

"I am sure he tries to be," agreed Durham; "but I am beginning to find out that we make a lot of mistakes in this respect. I have found in my own case that I do not always do the right thing, even when I am trying my best. Now, there must be some way of knowing exactly what is right and what is wrong."

Mary's astonishment became greater.

"I didn't know you ever thought about such things, Arthur."

"I never did until recently. A few days before we went to Tonga, a friend invited me to go to his church to hear what he called a lecture, but which seemed a good deal more like a sermon to me. I was much impressed by what I heard. I never knew the Bible contained the things he said and I made up my mind to read it and find out. The result is that I have a great deal better understanding about it and what it teaches."

Mary's eyes sparkled.

"I'm so glad, Arthur! Why, I've been reading it all my life. It's a wonderful book."

"It surely is; and it has a lot of things in it that I never knew about. Did you know it contains the remedy for sickness as well as sin?"

Mary nodded her head energetically: "Of course! That's why I am never sick."

"I see," said Durham slowly; "and I also begin to see why you are so different from all the other girls I know." Then after a pause: "If the teaching of the Bible can be applied to sickness, why can't it be used to heal the sick financial condition brought about by your Uncle Simon's will and the lack of his guiding hand? Certainly the condition needs a strong remedy."

"Then why not apply it?"

"That's what I had in mind when I spoke about getting wisdom. If what I have been reading is true; if we just know how to trust in the Divine Mind in which is all the wisdom of the universe—we shall be shown what to do. To me, that seems to be the teaching of the Bible, for in it I have read: 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, and it shall be given him.' That looks pretty good to me."

"Yes," ejaculated Mary, with an emphatic nod of her head, "and the Bible also teaches that if we pray, believ-

ing our prayers will be answered, they will be."

"Well, I have prayed," declared Durham, "the best I know how, and I surely believe there is some way of showing your grandfather wherein he is wrong and prevailing upon him to change his opinion."

Mary shook her head.

"I am afraid my faith along that line is pretty small."

"Then I must help you to strengthen it," said Durham emphatically. "What's the use of having the promises if you can't use them? We are told to trust in God. Why not do it?"

"I do try," said Mary meekly.

"You'll have to do better than try," was Durham's brusque reply. "You'll have to succeed if you expect to get anywhere."

Mary's eyes expressed her admiration. "You are so practical!" she exclaimed.

"Well, I try to be, and I'll help your grandfather in every way I can, just as I promised. I am absolutely certain, however, that his plan for dividing the estate is not only absurd, but impossible. He will not go far before something will occur to open his eyes and prove what I am saying."

Mary drew a long breath.

"I feel so much better when I hear you talk, Arthur." Then, after a pause: "Do you think Uncle Simon was dishonest?"

"Not in the way your grandfather thinks. It is a good deal as Morris says—although I must admit I haven't much use for Morris or his methods. Your Uncle Simon's interests were so gigantic that if he only made a very small sum on each transaction that passed through his office, the aggregate could not fail to be great. I'll admit he did many things of which I do not approve. I might have done them myself once. I wouldn't now."

"Is that because you have been reading your Bible?"

asked Mary.

"It may be; or it may be because of you. Anyway, I know I wouldn't do them." Then after a long and thoughtful pause: "From what I have heard my father say, I feel there are some persons with whom your Uncle dealt, to whom restitution is due. These could be reached without much trouble; but this indiscriminate division of the estate—why, it can't be done. There is no just way—"

Durham stopped short with an exclamation of satis-

faction.

"That's it!" he said. "That's why it isn't right to do as your grandfather contemplates. It would be unjust."

"How?" asked Mary.

"In many ways. I can't enumerate them now; but I get a glimpse of what I mean. He'll see it, too."

The look of admiration of Mary's face deepened. "Oh, Arthur," she exclaimed, "how wise you are!"

Durham's face flushed.

"Cut it out!" he laughed. "I may have picked up a

few scattering ideas, but I'm no Solomon."

"And I'm so glad," Mary continued without paying any heed to his words, "that you don't think Uncle Simon was so awful bad. I wish you could change Daddy's belief about him."

"I'll try," he promised. "Of course most men have two sides, and Simon—"

"You haven't two sides, have you, Arthur?" interrupted the girl.

Durham regarded her quizzically, but made no reply.

"Why don't you answer?" she demanded impatiently. "I have a right to know," and she regarded him with an expression which indicated her determination to have what she considered her right.

"Well," Durham finally said, "According to my own

diagnosis, I must have two sides; but-"

"Oh, Arthur, how could you?"

"I suppose I was born that way; but so far as you are concerned there is only one."

Mary shook her head sadly.

The action was almost pitiful in its meaning, and Durham realized what was passing through her mind. Laying aside his jocularity, he took her face between his hands and, looking down into her eyes, said earnestly:

"I want you to believe that what I mean by my two sides is not exactly a good side and a bad side. Out in the world where men meet, they cannot always show their home side. Although they must, at times, be severe and firm, it does not mean that they must be bad. There are hard knocks to be received, and sometimes hard blows have to be delivered in return. There is a sterner side to

we men than the side we show to those we love; but stern and hard as we must sometimes be, a man can always be honest and true. That I have always tried to be. You believe me, don't you, sweetheart?"

He awaited her reply fearlessly, while her eyes grew

moist with a thrill of joy at his words.

"You have made me very happy," was all she said.

Had she spoken volumes, she could not have said more.

"And I promise," continued Arthur, after a pause, "to do my level best to change your grandfather's opinion, not only about your Uncle Simon, but about the wisdom of his intentions."

Durham absolutely lived up to his promise: but Mat-

thew refused to be changed.

Invariably he returned to his original statement: "No man could honestly amass such a fortune in his lifetime, even though he might have done nothing outside the pale of the law. Simon's methods remind me of the logic in one of Carleton's poems:

'You needn't always tell the truth to spoil a trade that's brewin'!

For if you don't take men in, in trade Why they'll take you in.'

"This," Matthew declared with emphasis, "has been the American business man's creed—both in and out of the church—ever since I can remember; but if every man in the world believed it—which, thank God, they do not—it would not be right. Neither time nor usage can ever make wrong right; nor a lie the truth."

"But, Mr. Brent," argued Durham, "your brother started to accumulate his great fortune at a time when profits were large and opportunities were great. He may have been an opportunist; but what man is not? Being a man of sound judgment, he was nearly always on the right

side of the market. In addition to this, properties which he acquired at a fair price nearly half a century ago, have increased in value many hundred fold, simply

through the natural growth of this great city."

"That's it! That's it!" exclaimed Matthew; "but where's the justice? Why should Simon get all the profits? Why shouldn't those who helped to increase these values—especially those immediately interested—share in the increase? That's where our social system is wrong, and in the case of Simon and his estate I am going to right it. That's what he expected me to do."

Durham shook his head. "Your theory may be all

Durham shook his head. "Your theory may be all right," he said. "I don't profess to be a judge; but I am sure that under existing conditions it is impossible to justly divide any estate in accord with such a theory.

How would you go about it?"

"I haven't fully decided; but it ought to be easy with the help of Morris and Prichard."

Durham looked the doubt he felt.

"It is easy enough to give away the money," he said—
"If you don't care to whom you give it; but if you really
expect to divide the estate among those who might be
considered rightfully entitled to consideration, that is
another matter. Its like trying to unscramble eggs. In
my opinion, it can't be done."

"It must be done!" replied Matthew emphatically, "no

matter how difficult the task! It is justice!"

"It is rank injustice!" Durham declared.

Matthew regarded him in surprise. "Injustice to whom?" he asked.

"To your granddaughter for one—and I don't believe the courts will allow—"

"Injustice to Mary!" interrupted Matthew. "How can that possibly be? What has she ever done that would entitle her to this vast wealth? Not a single thing!"

"You're wrong, Mr. Brent. She has done much."

Matthew regarded the young man with astonishment and doubt.

"What? I should like to know."

"She made the last year of your brother's life one of joy and happiness. Do you call that nothing?" "No," thoughtfully, "that is a good deal, and I shall

take that into account in dividing the estate."

"I should think so," declared Durham as he arose to depart, "especially when men are spending hundreds-yes, thousands of dollars-for even one hour's enjoyment."

Durham's argument must have pleased, even though it did not convince Matthew, for he remarked to Mary some

hours later:

"I am not sure but Arthur has a keener perception of the problems of life than I thought. He has just been showing me the deeper side of his character."

"He told me every man had two sides," replied Mary

with a happy little laugh. "I am glad you are finding his

best."

"So am I, and I wish the other side were not so pronounced."

Mary's heart gave a little jump. "The other side, Daddy? You don't think Arthur has a bad side, do you?"

"Some might not call it so; but it looks bad to me—this absorbing desire to pile up money!"

Mary heaved a sigh of relief. "You mean like Uncle Simon?"

"Exactly."

"Was that so very, very bad, Daddy?"

"Absolutely unpardonable."

With which decisive and, to him, undebatable reply, Matthew turned to his Tribune, the simple presence of which brought back his past and was a source of the greatest delight.

CHAPTER XVIII

MATTHEW Brent was not only a God-fearing manhe was a God-loving man. He was a firm believer in the teachings of the Master that the first is the great commandment and the second "which is like unto it," is:

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

To be able to apply the Golden Rule in the administration of his brother's estate was now his greatest desire. To this end he spent the next few days, while the legal formalities regarding his appointment as executor were being taken, in looking over such of the Brent properties as he was able; in learning something of their character and in gaining some idea of their magnitude.

It was little he could see and less that he was able to comprehend. The more he saw, the greater his task appeared. Each day the problem of dividing an estate, which reached out into many lines of human endeavor, seemed more difficult of solution. Still Matthew never

wavered in his determination.

"There must be a way," he kept saying over and over to himself.

To Mary, however, he confided his doubts and fears. "I told you," he said at dinner one day, "that I was not fit for this work. Why, the manner of doing business has so changed in fifty years, that I hardly knew where to go to buy a pair of galluses. I tried to get them in three or four different places before I found a store that kept them. In one place they didn't even know what they were."

"You should have gone to a gentleman's store, Daddy."

"Aren't all stores gentlemen's stores?"

"No; some are ladies' stores and some are children's.

But where did you finally find them?"

"I don't know, but it was a mighty big place. They kept a little of most everything. Reminded me of the store that Deacon Howe used to keep up at Yonkers when I was a boy. He sold groceries, hardware, cider and tobacco on one side and dry-goods, millinery, boots and shoes on the other, with mill-feed and pork in the back room."

"They call that a department store now," explained Mary.

"They just called it a store when I was a boy—a

country store."

"You could hardly call this a country store."

"No," admitted Matthew, "it's a city store; but the change isn't in the store—it's in the city."

Mary looked puzzled. "How is that?" she asked.

"Why, the city has adopted country ways."

"Then you ought to feel right at home; we've lived in the country so long."

Matthew scratched his chin.

"I've missed a point somewhere," he finally said. Then after a pause: "Guess I forgot to observe that the country has grown bigger, too, since I left."

"You expected that, didn't you?"

"I don't know what I expected, Mary. I had no idea when I left Tonga how things here would look. I certainly did not expect such great changes and I don't seem able to get used to them. I keep forgetting that I have been out of the world fifty years, and I keep expecting to see the same things and the same people—that is the same kind of people I used to know. But they're all different. Why, Mary, they don't even look as they did."

He became silently thoughtful, his mind harking back into the past, while Mary observed him closely for several minutes. When she again spoke it was with unusual earnestness.

"Have you decided what you are going to do?" she asked.

"You mean about dividing the estate?"

"Yes."

"Not yet."

"You must have some plan."

"Well I have, but I haven't figured out the details. You see it's like this: After my one day's experience, I can see that I don't know how to carry on this business like Simon did—and I wouldn't if I could. The thing that is making all the trouble is too much money. I don't propose to add to the trouble by increasing our wealth. That's just what is happening, however, every day the business continues, and so I've decided to put the Simon Brent estate out of business just as soon as I am lawfully empowered to act."

"Can you do it?"

"Why not?"

Mary shook her head. "I don't know; but it looks im-

possible to me."

"Why impossible? Just suppose that big store I was in today should decide to go out of business; wouldn't it be easy?"

"How?"

"Why, just close the doors some night and not open the next morning."

"What would they do with all the goods they had left?"

Matthew looked up and smiled whimsically.

"I haven't thought of that. I was thinking more of a newspaper. All a newspaper has to do to go out of business is to cease publication."

"But Uncle Simon's estate isn't like a newspaper, Daddy. It is more like the department store. Now what would the department store do with all the things it had left?"

Matthew thought deeply for a minute and then his face

beamed with a sudden light.

"Why, they could do just what I propose to do with Simon's property: Divide it among those who had helped accumulate it. Then everybody would get a just share, from the proprietor down to the cash boy. Those who had given the most time and labor would get the most, while those who had contributed the least would get the least. That's just what we shall do with Simon's money. Don't you see?"

"Ye-ye-s," was Mary's hesitating answer. "I see how it would work in a store where you could find out who had helped and who had not; but how can we find out about

those who helped Uncle Simon make his money?"

"There must be a way," was Matthew's confident reply, "and it is my business to find out. I shall begin going

over Simon's books and private papers tomorrow."

After making this decision Matthew was a daily visitor at the office, but made no attempt to interfere with the regular order of affairs. He spent hours about the *Planet*, observing the methods there in vogue and in watching the linotypes, which were a source of unending delight.

Mary invariably accompanied her grandfather down town in the morning and called for him in the afternoon. Several times she met Morris, and two or three times she encountered Gilson Gage—seemingly by the merest accident, and he always manifested the greatest concern in her affairs. Having heard his warning to her grandfather on that first morning of his arrival, this seemed but natural.

"I certainly appreciate your kindly interest—both yours and Mr. Morris's," she told him one day. "I am most grateful for two such loyal friends, but I do not feel that I can do any more than I have to dissuade Daddy from his purpose."

"Cannot your uncle's lawyer influence him?"

"Mr. Morris says not—nor Mr. Durham either," she added as an after thought.

Gage noticed the tinge of pink in her cheeks as she spoke Durham's name and mentally gnashed his teeth. Reply-

ing, he merely said:

"I am glad for your sake, as well as your grandfather's, that Mr. Durham sees things in the right light. I could only wish he were older and had more experience. The close relationship between your two families naturally places him in a position to wield a great influence. I have no doubt he will do all he can for you, but he is so young that his experience is necessarily limited. What does his mother think? She is a woman of sound judgment."

Mary smiled significantly.

"Really, Mr. Gage, I do not know. Daddy is a trifle old-fashioned and does not think much of a woman's advice."

"So I should imagine," he laughed, "but I have learned, Miss Brent, that woman's wisdom is not to be lightly regarded," and he bowed himself out of her presence.

"A charming man," mused Mary as he withdrew. "I

can't see why Arthur does not like him."

While Matthew was quick to discover that the New York of today is not the New York of fifty years ago, he was not so quickly able to appreciate the broader methods necessitated by the changed business conditions; nor did he realize how pronounced, although gradual, the change had been.

Quietly, therefore, he perfected what, to him, looked

like a very simple plan, and early on the morning after he was established as the legal executor of the estate, he appeared in the editorial rooms of the Planet. Completely ignoring Duvall and the managing editor, he went directly to the city editor.

"I want this put on the first page," he said abruptly, handing out two pages of loosely written copy, "It isn't typewritten, as I see pretty much everything is now-a-

days; but I guess you can read it."

The city editor ran his eyes hastily over

manuscript.

What he read fairly took his breath away and convinced him on the spot that Matthew was bereft of his senses.

"Hadn't you better consult Mr. Duvall about this

before you print it?" he asked.

Matthew drew himself up and looked down upon the young man in a manner which brought vividly to that gentleman's mind the only interview he had ever had with Simon Brent.

"Why should I consult Mr. Duvall?" queried Matthew.

"Don't you think I know what I am doing?"

"Undoubtedly, sir," was the quick response, "but your request is most unusual. I really shouldn't feel at liberty to use it without-"

"Did you ever hear of Horace Greeley?" asked Matthew sternly.

"Why, yes, sir," and the city editor was now more than ever satisfied that Matthew was insane.

"Well, I am to this paper what Horace Greeley was to the Tri-bune. He allowed no employe to dictate to him. I will allow no one on this paper to question my orders."

"But, Mr. Brent, I am not the proper person to whom this article should be submitted. It should go to Mr. Nichols, the managing editor."

"Oh," he exclaimed, "I thought you handled the local news."

"Not a matter so unusual as this."

Taking the manuscript from the city editor, Matthew

made his way to the managing editor's desk.

"Good morning, Mr. Nichols," he said by way of attracting that gentleman's attention from some mail he was looking over.

"Why, good morning, Mr. Brent," returned Mr. Nichols arising from his chair. "You are down early

this morning."

"Yes, I have a little announcement I wish to make in

the Planet," and he handed Nichols the copy.

"I want it on the first page," he continued as Nichols was glancing over the manuscript, "but I don't want it displayed under such a large heading as you sometimes use."

"Do—don't what?" stammered the managing editor, looking first at the paper he held in his hand and then at Matthew, to assure himself that he was not dreaming.

"I do not want it displayed under too large headlines. I think your headlines are frequently altogether out of proportion to the value of the news. I am sure Horace Greeley would not have approved of such a display."

"And I am sure Horace Greeley would not have approved of this, Mr. Brent," explained Nichols in desperation, shaking the paper at the old man and not knowing what else to say.

Matthew rubbed his chin reflectively.

"No, I don't believe he would," he finally admitted. "There were some matters upon which Greeley and I did not agree; but I want that published just the same."

"Have you consulted Mr. Duvall about it?"

Matthew's face grew dark.

"Why should I consult Mr. Duvall? My brother com-

missioned me to divide his estate and said that my will was his. This is my will and I want it published today. We will not discuss the matter further."

He walked away from the desk, but returned a moment later.

"I forgot to say," he remarked to the still agitated managing editor, "that I want what I have written published just as I have written and without comment."

Following Matthew's command, the next edition of the

Planet contained the following:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Be it known that I, Matthew Brent, having been appointed and duly qualified executor of the estate of my brother, the late Simon Brent; and by his last will and testament, having been instructed and empowered to divide his estate, do hereby request that all persons who have suffered through any act of my brother, or have been deprived of their rights by any act of his, or have not received a just share of the profits of their labor, or have any legal or moral claim against him, whatsoever, present their claims to me in writing at the earliest opportunity.

In explanation of the above request, I wish to state that I deem it impossible for any man to have amassed such a vast estate without having deprived many others of property rights and the benefit of labor to which they are justly entitled. Because I so believe, it is my desire—as it was also my brother's—to make restitution to all who have been thus defrauded.

In order to perform this duty in justice to all, I must have the honest co-operation of those having an interest in my brother's estate. Only those claims which are just and well founded will be considered. Therefore, all claims must be presented in

writing, with the facts fully set forth.

To the general public, which has a right to know my intentions, I further announce that the business of the late Simon Brent will be discontinued and its affairs adjusted as rapidly as possible. This adjudication I hope to affect easily and naturally, by the division of the estate among those justly entitled to it. I shall thereby clear my brother's name of any opprobrium that may attach thereto and bring success out of a life which he, himself, declared had been a failure

Matthew Brent.

The excitement caused by the publication of this remarkable announcement may better be imagined than described.

In accordance with Matthew's instruction it was not displayed in the *Planet*; but in the succeeding editions of the other New York papers it was literally spread all over their first page, with cuts, comments and criticisms. Reporters and space writers fairly overran the Brent offices in their scramble for interviews, until Matthew declared he had never been so "pestered" in his life. After trying to treat them all courteously, as he believed newspaper men should be treated, he was at last obliged to take refuge in his home and deny himself to all callers.

"I see they are bound to make a sensation of it," he declared with no little show of temper, "although there is nothing sensational in it. I have tried to give them facts, but my every word and act is distorted. I shall make no more statements."

It goes without saying that Matthew's published intention was taken as the vagary of a madman, and the following day it was thus discussed throughout the land.

The only one not disturbed was Prichard.

It never once entered the mind of the old clerk to believe the announcement. To him, such action would have been a sacrilege. All day he moved about the offices with a smile on his face, expecting every minute that Matthew would send for him: but when Matthew finally left the office and no such summons had come, the old man could wait no longer and betook himself to the Brent mansion, determined to find out what it all meant.

Being quite as old as Matthew—in fact since that gentleman's visit to the barber shop he appeared older—he felt himself a privileged character; and so, after a few words of greeting he began by saying:

"I came up here this evening, Matthew, to have a talk

with you about that piece you had in the paper today."

"Yes," replied Matthew gingerly. "What about it?" "Of course I know you don't mean it; but what is the idea?"

Matthew regarded him enquiringly.

"What do you mean?" he finally asked.

"That's what I asked you," replied Prichard. "As Simon's confidential clerk, he always told me the exact truth about things. Every once in a while he had an interview with himself printed, just to throw 'em off the scent; but he always explained it to me, so I wouldn't make any mistakes. Now, Matthew, what's the game?" and the old man rubbed his hands together in expectation.

"Prichard, you're an old idiot!" exclaimed Matthew

angrily.

"I expect I am, Matthew! I expect I am! You're too clever for me. I always told Simon you wasn't such a fool—"

"I'm certainly much obliged for your good opinion," interrupted Matthew, "but you're wrong this time. There is no game, as you put it. My words mean just exactly what they say."

The smile faded from Prichard's face. He leaned forward in his chair with one hand outstretched in

protest.

"No, no, Matthew!" he exclaimed and his voice indicated the greatest distress. "You don't mean it! You don't mean it!"

"I mean every word of it."

The old clerk sank back into his seat as though about to collapse.

"It would be a crime," he muttered under his breath. "It will be the undoing of a crime," replied Matthew.

For some moments there was silence while the two old men confronted each other. At length Prichard aroused himself with a mighty-effort and, looking Matthew squarely in the face, said slowly:

"Matthew, you don't understand! You don't know

how Simon worked and schemed and slaved-"

"No," retorted Matthew savagely, "and I don't want to know how. It is enough for me to know he did scheme and slave. It is my work to undo the schemes by which so

many have been robbed."

"I tell you, Matthew," and Prichard's voice and manner became stronger and more aggressive— "you don't understand. You've been out of the world too long. You don't belong here. You don't understand the world. You don't understand business. You don't understand men. If you did, you would see how impossible it is to do the things you suggest."

"Why is it impossible?"

"Because most of the men who might honestly be entitled to some of the money are dead. Others never knew and never will that they haven't had all that is due them. Many who never lost a cent through Simon, think they did; and these will make all sorts of claims. You never can get at the right of it."

"Nonsense, Prichard, I know better! We are not going to give away this wealth to every Tom, Dick and Harry who comes along. The claims must be presented in writing and we shall take plenty of time to decide. It is not a forced division. It is entirely voluntary, and I am

sure it can be made justly."

Prichard shook his head.

"I know better."

"Why," continued Matthew optimistically, "with your knowledge of Simon's affairs and with you to help me—"

"What?" interrupted Prichard. "Me help you? Never!"

"Why not?"

"Why not? Why not? Matthew Brent, I would cut off my right hand sooner than put down upon paper one figure that would help to destroy the fortune which Simon spent his life to create.

"No," and Prichard arose to his feet, "if you persist in carrying out this insane idea, I shall wind up my work at the earliest possible moment and never again set my foot

inside those offices."

Matthew shrugged his shoulders.

"Just as you please," he said, "I shall get along without you some way. As soon as I decide to how much of the estate you are entitled, I shall send it to you."

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. I am sure you must have aided largely in the successful management of this business.

You should be entitled to a good share—"

"I want no share!" interrupted Prichard vehemently. "I want nothing that Simon Brent did not give me! It was his brains, not mine, that made the money; and it is your lack of brains, Matthew Brent, that will scatter it to the winds. I want none of it! I'll have none of it!"

Grabbing his hat from the table, he angrily and

hurriedly left the house.

CHAPTER XIX

EARLY the following morning Matthew began going over private papers and examining accounts, and for two days Simon's usually orderly office was turned topsyturvy while the floor was strewn with ledgers of by-gone days. On the third morning, contrary to all precedent, Franklin Morris reached the office shortly after eight o'clock. None of the employes except Billy had arrived, and Morris with memorandum book in hand, was looking through the files and stock books piled high on Matthew's desk when Gage entered.

"Well," he asked abruptly, "what headway have you

made?"

"Considerable," and Morris jotted down several numbers and closed his book. "I believe my plan is well worked out. Judge Ipswich has assured Judge Everett that he would be glad to grant the necessary order, provided the girl can be induced to make the application. He is thoroughly convinced that Matthew Brent is insane."

"Do you think the girl will do it?"

"You never can tell what a woman will do," was the philosophical reply, "but I am sure I have made some headway in gaining Miss Brent's confidence during the past few days. I believe I can induce her to sign the application. I may, however, be obliged to use a little strategy."

"All's fair in love and war," remarked Gage.

"And I suppose you think this might come under either classification?" replied Morris with a cynical smile.

"You know we have lost a lot of valuable time," con-

tinued Gage, paying no attention to Morris's remark.

"Yes; but we shall be stronger than ever when we get the court order."

"Oh, undoubtedly," and Gage lighted a fresh cigar,

"Once we get rid of Durham-"

"You leave Durham to me," growled Morris. "Right now, however, he is playing into our hands by advising Miss Brent that she ought to take some step to save the estate."

"So I discovered. Strange what confidence she has in him."

"Not at all. She's true blue and Durham's clean—too clean to suit us; but I'll shatter her confidence."

Gage took a couple of strong pulls at his cigar.

"It won't be easy," he finally said. "If she is as good as you say—and I entirely agree that she is—it will be mighty hard to shake her confidence in Durham."

"Unless," Morris added hastily, "I can make her

jealous."

Gage nodded his head knowingly.

"I didn't think you knew women so well," he laughed. "But," more seriously, "whatever is done must be done quickly. Confidence in Bowen is growing and it will be harder to destroy than a week ago."

"There is one big point in our favor."

"What's that?"

"This action of 'Brother Matthew' as the papers call him. The support of a fanatic is of no benefit to Bowen, or any one else."

Gage laughed boisterously: "It's the worst I ever heard! As you say, every boost from such a source is a knock." He took out his memorandum book. "Now as to

details. This is the last of the month. The fourth of March is Inauguration Day. That gives us just four days in which to work."

"It is long enough," declared Morris. "Once I get this

court order, I'll fix the market."

"And I'll do the rest," was Gage's emphatic rejoinder.
Morris looked at his watch. "I sent a message to Miss
Brent to meet me here at eight-thirty and I'm expecting
her every minute." Then as Billy entered from the adjoining room: "I think we had better go into my private
office to discuss the details."

"A nice pair, I don't think," was Billy's mental comment as Morris and Gage withdrew and he seated himself at the typewriter. "The only reason they don't steal the sun is because it's too hot."

Mary had received Morris's note the previous evening and had shown it to Durham.

"What do you suppose he wants?" she asked.

"Says he has an important matter to discuss and wants to see you when your grandfather is not present," replied Durham scanning the note.

"But why doesn't he want Daddy present?"

"Probably wants to talk to you about him. Everybody else is talking about him, so it won't be anything new."

"It looks to me as though he had no confidence in

Daddy."

"That isn't strange either," laughed Durham, "I'm beginning to lose mine."

"Why, Arthur!"

"Well, I can't help it. He is way off. Everybody but you and I think he is crazy. If I were you I'd go down and see what Morris wants. He may suggest some plan to save the estate. Nothing could be worse than it is now."

Thus it was that a few minutes after Billy had seated

himself at the typewriter, Mary entered the office.

"Aren't you coming in?" she asked over her shoulder as her escort stopped on the threshold.

"Huh-uh!" laughed Durham. "Morris doesn't want to

see me."

"Why not?" and then as she espied Billy. "Oh, Billy, will you tell Mr. Morris I am here."

"Will I?" and Billy arose with a flourish. "There ain't

anything I wouldn't do for you."

He hastened to obey, remarking to himself as he left the room: "Oh, Theodore, don't I wish I was Mr. Durham!

He's just the man we need here."

"Morris thinks I spoiled his game the other day," was Durham's reply to Mary's question, "and maybe I did. Anyway, he will not care to see me. I'll go and bring your grandfather down town. There are a few things I must tell him. I think it is about time we named the day—"

"There's no hurry at all about that," declared Mary,

interrupting him.

"I think there is," insisted Durham emphatically, as he bent quickly over and kissed her. Then as he disappeared: "Good-bye, I'll see you later."

"Isn't he a dear!" under her breath, and her cheeks

were still pink when Morris entered.

"I'm greatly obliged to you for coming down this morning," he said by way of greeting. "It is a serious matter, Miss Brent, or I should not have requested the interview. Won't you be seated? I have many things to say."

"I trust they are not disagreeable," she said as she took the proffered seat. "You look as though they might be

serious."

"They are."

"Can't you tell them to my grandfather, Mr. Morris?" "It is about your grandfather that I would speak. Of

course you understand what the effect will be, should he accomplish what he is trying to do?"

"You mean about dividing the estate?"

"If that is what you call it. I call it ruining the estate—yes, and all connected with it. His plans are the wild vagaries of a lunatic."

"Pardon me, Mr. Morris," said Mary coldly, "I object to having my grandfather designated by any such name."

"I do not mean it as a term of reproach," explained Morris in his most dignified manner. "I make the assertion simply as a fact. Probably it does not appear so to you, because you have known your grandfather only as a loving, simple old man; but if some action is not taken to prevent him from carrying out his wild plan, he will not only ruin the estate, but will drag down with it hundreds, yes thousands of others who are depending upon its varied activities for support."

An expression of deep distress spread itself over

Mary's face.

"Mr. Durham has said something similar to me, but

I do not think I understand-exactly."

"I am sure that you do not and I have felt that you needed the advice of a man of experience. That is why I have asked you to come here and empower me, your uncle's confidential adviser, to take such action as will protect all concerned."

"Have you spoken to Mr. Durham about it?"

"No, Miss Brent, for I do not consider Mr. Durham the proper counselor for your grandfather."

Mary's face flushed. "Uncle Simon had the greatest

confidence in Mr. Durham," she said.

"For a young man, yes; but I am sure he did not consider him a proper person to administer this estateand that is what his advice would amount to should your grandfather follow it. Some years from now, I doubt

not, he will be all that your uncle expected of him. But no young man who spends his nights at late suppers with questionable characters—"

Mary's eyes flashed: "I don't believe Mr. Durham is that kind of a young man," she declared rising to her

feet. "I am sure he has not-"

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Duvall. He had been summoned by Morris and could not have entered at a more opportune moment—for Morris.

"If you doubt my word, Miss Brent," said that gentleman, "ask Mr. Duvall. As a newspaper man, familiar with all that is going on in New York, he is in a position to know."

"I refuse to ask any one about Mr. Durham!" was

Mary's emphatic reply.

"But I insist upon having my word corroborated," was Morris's equally emphatic rejoinder. Then turning to Duvall, he asked:

"Mr. Duvall, what is Arthur Durham's reputation?"
Duvall looked from one to the other in a questioning
manner.

"I would rather not answer such a question," he replied.

"There are grave reasons why you should answer,"

Morris declared.

"Indeed there are!" insisted Mary. "Will you kindly answer Mr. Morris's question, Mr. Duvall?"

Duvall hesitated and then replied with as much grace as possible under the circumstances: "Why about the average, I guess."

"What do you mean by 'about the average'?" asked

Mary.

"That of the average wealthy young man about town." "Late suppers with questionable characters, is what

Mr. Morris said," declared Mary. "Is that what you mean?"

Duvall's face flushed. The whole conversation was such a surprise he did not know what to say. It was not at all to his liking, so he made no reply.

Taking his silence for an answer, Mary continued: "What does he mean by questionable characters?"

"Why—why," stammered Duvall, "persons who—who—a—well, persons who would hardly be suitable for you to know."

"Do you mean," exclaimed Mary, the blood leaving her face, "that Arthur associates—that he goes to any place where he could not take his mother or me?"

"Of course! All men do. I fail to see that this is

anything against his reputation."

But Mary saw it differently, as Morris knew she would. She had been brought up in an environment where there were no "questionable" places; not even places where men gather exclusively to eat, smoke and discuss business affairs in an informal way. To her sensitive nature, men who patronized resorts to which they could not take their families, must be leading a double life.

Besides, did she not have Arthur's own testimony that men were two-sided—testimony corroborated by her grandfather, whose word she would no more doubt than she would doubt the teaching of Holy Writ. Thus it was that she replied with an emphasis not to be mistaken:

"All men do not! I am surprised that you have the

hardihood to admit such a thing!"

Duvall was too greatly surprised to make an answer; but Morris was ready with the suggestion sinister.

"Miss Brent is quite right. Men of affairs do not do such things, Duvall, and I, too, am surprised at your admission!"

Duvall shrugged his shoulders as Mary continued:

"If I believed Arthur Durham that kind of a man, I should have little or no confidence in him."

"I was certain of it," declared Morris. "That is why

I felt you should know."

"All I can say is," Duvall here interposed, "that I am exceedingly sorry for Mr. Durham. I do not care to discuss the matter further."

For a space Mary stood irresolute. The whole conversation had been such a surprise that she was dazed and confused. It was really her first temptation to doubt that eternal good ruled the world, and she was unable for the moment to withstand it. Burying her face in her hands she sank into a chair exclaiming: "Oh, why, did I ever leave Tonga?"

Duvall cast upon Morris a glance of contempt as he said sympathetically: "Don't cry, Miss Brent. Durham

is no worse than others."

Morris frowned.

"But you'll agree with me, Duvall, that Durham is lacking as a counselor to a man in Mr. Brent's position."

"Oh, undoubtedly. He should have someone more

mature."

"I think Miss Brent will admit that," continued Morris.

"I feel that I am prepared to admit anything—almost my own identity. Let us finish this interview as quickly as possible, Mr. Morris. It has been the most painful experience of my life."

"And quite unnecessary, it seems to me," was Duvall's

comment.

"You are entirely wrong!" declared Morris with an angry and impatient gesture. "I beg of you both to listen to what I have to say."

He seated himself and drew from his pocket a package

of papers.

"I was just explaining to Miss Brent when you came

in, Duvall," Morris began in a more subdued voice, "the trouble her grandfather is causing by his ill-advised action. I think she should know; don't you?"

"Unquestionably."

"By the terms of her uncle's will her grandfather is made sole executor, which by the way," Morris added as an after-thought, "is quite unusual. In the settlement of so large an estate there are usually two or more. Am I not right?" Again appealing to Duvall.

"Quite right. The work is too great for any one man."

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Duvall, and especially is it too great for a man as old as your grandfather, Miss Brent-a man who has been in retirement these many years. I can see that the strain is already beginning to tell upon him. Hadn't you noticed it?"

Mary admitted that she had.

"Now my idea is this," continued Morris confidentially: "In the settlement of the estate, I would suggest that you ask the court to appoint a coadjutor—an assistant executor, so to speak-who not only can advise wisely, but who will take the matter largely out of your grandfather's hands. I would be glad to do this myself, but Mr. Brent seems to have taken a dislike to me."

"Who else is there?" inquired Mary, her thoughts so full of sorrow that she scarcely comprehended what Morris was saying, "Mr. Duvall perhaps?"

The suggestion was so unexpected that neither of the

men was prepared for it. Duvall could not fail to see the advantage that would accrue to him and replied in his most diplomatic tone:

"Really, Miss Brent, this is something entirely new

to me; but if you wish-"

"I don't think Mr. Duvall has had the requisite experience," interrupted Morris frowning savagely upon the speaker, "and, besides he is needed where he is. I would suggest Gilson Gage. He is a strong man and was much in the confidence of your uncle."

Realizing his position, Duvall saw that it was much

better to acquiese.

"Well, yes, he might do. In fact I think he would, but-"

Whatever his objection might have been it was not spoken, for Billy hastily entered and announced that Mr. Duvall was wanted below.

"I am sorry to lose Mr. Duvall's advice," said Morris with seeming regret as the door closed behind him, "but I think you and I can settle this thing very easily."

He spread upon the table before her an important looking document, which impressed upon Mary her own in-

significance.

"In this paper," continued Morris, "Your Uncle's attorney, Judge Everett, has set forth your grandfather's lack of experience in financial affairs, and in your behalf asks the court to appoint a coadjutor. He has left the name blank; but, if you approve, I shall be glad to insert the name of Mr. Gage, who I feel sure will accept. I—"

Again the conversation was interrupted by the entrance

of Billy.

"What is it?" Morris asked sharply as Billy stopped in front of him.

"Mr. Gage is waiting outside to see you."

Morris arose in apparent surprise.

"How fortunate," he exclaimed. "Ask him to come

right in."

While Billy went to execute his order Morris continued: "If you say so, Miss Brent, I will insert Mr. Gage's name now."

For a moment Mary hesitated.

"Surely, Mr. Morris ought to know," she thought, "and Mr. Gage is an honorable man." Aloud, she said: "Just

as you say, Mr. Morris. I seem to have lost my faith in everyone and to be without a friend."

"Don't say that, Miss Brent. I shall always be glad to advise you in any way I can. I am sure you will not regret this action."

He took a pencil from his pocket and wrote the name of Gilson Gage in the document, as that gentleman

entered the door followed by Billy.

"Ah, Gage," he exclaimed, rising from his chair, "we were just talking about you. I have suggested to Miss Brent that she apply to the court to have you appointed co-executor of her uncle's estate—that is, if you will accept?"

Gage affected a well-feigned surprise.

"Of course," he said in a hesitating manner, "I have never considered such an appointment; but if Miss Brent desires, I shall certainly accept." Then to Mary: "Your confidence is indeed gratifying."

Mary made no reply, the only comment being an inaudible one by Billy who again muttered something about "a nice pair of crooks," as he sat down at his

typewriter.

"There will be very little work to the position," explained Morris to Gage, "and we are very anxious that you accept—are we not, Miss Brent?"

"Yes," replied Mary mechanically, "Very."

To herself she was thinking, "How could Arthur deceive me so?"

Taking his fountain pen from his pocket, Morris offered it to her saying: "Now if you will just sign this application, we can have the matter attended to at once."

Mary took the pen and drew the paper towards her in

a hesitating manner.

"I wouldn't want to do anything to hurt Daddy's feelings," she said as she held the pen poised in her fingers. "This is not a question of sentiment," declared Morris.

"It is a question of saving the estate—and if you will permit me to say it, also of saving your grandfather."

With an air of determination, Mary drew the paper

toward her and slowly wrote her name.

"There," she exclaimed as she handed the pen back to

Morris. "It is done. I hope it will be for the best."

"There is no doubt of it, Miss Brent. This act of yours will simplify matters greatly. I congratulate you upon your wisdom."

Mary arose and pulled on her gloves in a listless

manner.

"If there is nothing more, Mr. Morris, I think I should

like to go home."

"Certainly! Certainly! I trust this matter has not been too great a strain upon you. Mr. Gage, will you kindly show Miss Brent to her car."

"With pleasure," and Gage showed Mary to the door, remarking to Morris as they departed: "When the

appointment is made let me know."

For just a moment after the two had left the room, Morris stood rubbing his hands with a satisfied air. Then he handed Billy the document Mary had just signed.

"Write in this name on the typewriter," he ordered, indicating where he had written in the name of Gilson Gage with a lead pencil, "and take it up to Judge Everett at once. Tell him I want him to present it to Judge Ipswich this morning and get immediate action—within the hour if possible."

"Yes, sir," was Billy's reply as he began rubbing out the lead pencil marks with an eraser. "Shall I write the

name in here?"

"Of course; and be quick about it."

Billy put the paper into the machine. For just a moment he hesitated as he asked:

"You said the same name, didn't you?"

"Yes! yes! Gilson Gage; and rush it up to Judge Everett at once."

As Billy proceeded to execute his order, Morris turned

to the telephone and called up Duvall.

"Miss Brent has applied to the court to have Gilson Gage appointed co-executor of her uncle's estate," he explained. "As soon as the appointment is made, see that an 'Extra' is rushed out."

He turned from the telephone with a satisfied air, just in time to see Billy disappearing through the door on his

errand to the lawyer's office.

"Well, well," he exclaimed again rubbing his hands together. "Not a bad morning's work. If Bowen's appointment can be held up for forty-eight hours longer, I'll be safe."

CHAPTER XX

MORRIS had barely finished his reflections and returned to his own office, when voices were heard in

the hallway, and Matthew and Durham entered.

"I do not wish to hear any further explanations," declared Matthew emphatically as he removed his overcoat and hat. "I see I have been greatly mistaken in you. You are not the kind of a man I should wish my granddaughter to marry."

"But, Mr. Brent," explained Durham, "I-"

"There are no buts," interrupted Matthew seating himself at his desk and busying himself with his papers as he talked. "I see you are one of those same, money-mad speculators, whose only aim in life is to pile up dollars at the expense of others."

"Pile up dollars!" exclaimed Durham. "Great Scott, I wish I could!" and he looked fiercely at the old man.

"No good purpose can be served by the accumulation of more wealth than your needs demand," Matthew continued with emphasis. "Weath so accumulated becomes a power for evil, instead of for good. I'll hear no more of it."

"But I insist that you do hear me," and Durham laid his hand upon Matthew's shoulder. "I'm not building up my fortune at the expense of others. I'm simply trying to use what I have in such a manner that those depending upon me shall be cared for in the proper manner."

Matthew regarded him earnestly for several moments.

"If this were your real object," he said, "you would divide the money you have among those associated with you—just as I am going to divide my brother's estate." Then as he turned to his work: "No! no! Until you change your way of thinking, I shall not permit you to marry my granddaughter. You would spoil her life."

The conversation was interrupted by Morris, who returned for a memorandum book he had left on the desk.

"Ah, good morning, Mr. Morris!" said Matthew cheerily as he noted who it was. "I am a little late this morning. I though my granddaughter was here."

"She was for a few minutes, but she has gone down-"

"Then I'll hurry up and catch her," and Durham hastily left the room, stopping in the door long enough to say to Matthew: "Remember what I tell you, Mr. Brent. It is a dangerous thing you are doing."

"I know what I am about," was the reply. "If Simon

was a failure I'll prove that I am not."

"You are still determined to carry out your wild scheme, are you?" asked Morris as he stopped a moment

by Matthew's desk.

"Wild? I see nothing wild about it. I am simply winding up my brother's business and arranging to give back to the rightful owners the millions ground out of them by Simon's greed."

"Impossible!" declared Morris. "Impossible and

impracticable!"

Matthew leaned back in his chair and shoved his hands

into his pockets.

"I see nothing impracticable or impossible in what I am doing. We have all the machinery with which the money was accumulated. The same machinery must distribute it. I have asked all persons having just claims to any portion of this estate to present them in writing. As they come in, we will consider and pass upon them."

"Pardon me, Mr. Brent," said Morris with an accent on the personal pronouns, "we will do nothing of the kind. I absolutely refuse to have anything to do with this absurd affair."

"What's that?" demanded Matthew leaning forward in his chair. "You won't!"

"No, sir; I won't."

Again Matthew plunged his hands into his pockets and

surveyed Morris from head to foot.

"Who are you, anyhow?" he finally asked. "What interest have you in this affair? As I understand it, you are simply an employe, and if you refuse to help me, as an honorable man should—if you refuse to obey my orders, I shall dispense with your services. Do you understand?" and Matthew smote the desk with his fist.

For a moment Morris hesitated. He was playing a deep game, and to be dismissed at this time would ruin his whole future.

He was quick to see his mistake and after a moment's pause replied diplomatically: "I shall be glad to do anything I can in reason to settle up this estate; but as for passing upon these claims—I simply cannot do it. I cannot conscientiously do it."

Matthew scratched his chin and silently pondered for

several minutes.

"Oh, very well," he finally said, "turn the claims over to me." Then, sternly, as Morris turned to leave the room. "But remember, Mr. Morris, that we have gone out of business. No more speculating. No more gambling with stocks and food."

He resumed his seat while Morris returned to his office to await the action of the court and his hour of triumph over Matthew and Durham.

Left alone, Matthew remained silently thoughtful for several minutes, going over in his mind the things he had

done during the past few days and estimating the progress he had made.

His meditation was eminently satisfactory and he turned to his work with a calm mind, despite the fact that the whole proceeding was looked upon by the world at large as the most gigantic piece of tomfoolery any man had ever conceived.

Matthew's remarkable announcement had been published on Saturday and it was now Tuesday.

On Sunday his action had been the news feature of the

day.

On Monday, having determined that the only way to stop making money was to stop business, he had issued an order that after that day there was to be no more buying of any kind and no selling except for cash.

"I want no more more dealings in futures," he declared.

"It is simply gambling."

He had not stopped to consider what these orders meant, nor had he yet learned that every crank, crook and confidence man in the country was busy figuring out some scheme whereby he might at least pocket a few of Simon Brent's dollars.

Already the condition in financial circles and among the thousands of employes of the industrial concerns controlled by the estate, were dangerously near a panic. The employes were about evenly divided between fear of losing their places and the hope of having turned over to them the whole of the business. In fact, in the distribution of so large a sum, it seemed impossible to those who had little or nothing, that they should be entirely barred from the feast.

Having finished his mental review Matthew turned to his desk and began sorting over the papers thereon, with never a thought of the multitudinous matters that were being attended to in the adjoining offices. With absolutely no knowledge of what was actually transpiring, he was as ignorant of the real condition of affairs as when on the other side of the globe. He was perfectly satisfied, in his ignorance, that he had by a word separated the entire estate from the business world.

As a matter of fact there was never greater need for a guiding hand. Several times during the next half hour Morris was tempted to submit to Matthew questions that demanded his attention; but refrained in the expectation of the court's action.

"It would only make matters worse," Morris said to himself, "and I had better wait until Gage is placed in charge."

Left to his own devices, Matthew was right in the midst of a most interesting paper when the telephone bell rang.

"I wonder who connected that thing up," he said with a frown.

Unconsciously he looked around for Billy, but Billy had not yet returned. He tried to resume his work, but the ringing of the telephone interrupted him. For a moment he stopped and eyed it with trepidation.

"I wonder if I dare," he mused. "I reckon I'll have to,"

he finally added as the ringing continued.

He picked up the 'phone in much the same manner that

he had pulled the Portuguese sailor to his feet.

"Hello!" he called. "Hello! That's what I said. Hello!" There was a pause. "Can't you come a little nearer. You seem a long ways off. No? You're in Jersey City?"

A smile spread itself over Matthew's face.

"We used to say that was a long way from New York," he remarked more to himself than to the telephone. Then after a pause: "Yes, I'm Matthew Brent."

Still another pause, while over Matthew's face there

spread a broader smile—a smile that would have proved

a winning advertisement for any pain exterminator.

"Oh, you're a newspaper man?" he finally said into the phone. "I'm a newspaper man myself. Yes. I was on the Tri-bune fifty years ago—Horace Greeley's paper. Great man, Greeley—ever meet him? Yes? What? You don't say so! Well, well, I am glad to know you. Can't you come over to see me? Huh? What? Oh, you have a claim against my brother's estate? Well! Well! Bring it right over. I'll be glad to see you. When? Oh, any time, any time. Good bye!" and he hung up the telephone with an air of satisfaction, just as Billy entered the room.

"What do you think," he exclaimed turning to Billy, "I was just talking to a man who used to know Greeley. I'll be glad to see him."

"So will I, sir," replied Billy. "He must be a good one

if he's anything like you."

He approached the desk and laid a handful of letters before Matthew.

"Mr. Morris told me to give you these."

"What are they?" and Matthew eyed them askance.

"Mr. Morris said they were claims. He said you would understand."

"Oh, yes, yes," and Matthew picked up one and opened it. "Let's see what it is."

Billy stood at attention while Matthew read:

"Matthew Brent. Dear Sir: Forty years ago I owned an acre of land on Riverside Drive, near where Grant's Tomb is now located. I sold it to Simon Brent for two thousand dollars—"

"Two thousand dollars!" commented Matthew. "Well

that seems a pretty good price."

He resumed his reading: "With the improvements it is now worth five hundred thousand. Kindly—"

"What's this," and he held out the letter at arms length; "Kindly send me a check for four hundred and ninety-eight thousand dollars that your brother beat me out of. Signed Michael Murphy."

"Gee!" exclaimed Billy. "He's got his nerve with him,

ain't he?"

Matthew looked at the boy over the top of his spectacles.

"It does seem a rather questionable claim, doesn't it, William? You don't happen to know who Michael Murphy is, do you?"

Billy shook his head: "Never heard of Michael; but the last name sounds mighty familiar. It's a wonder

he didn't want the whole estate!"

"I wonder what I'd better do with it?" soliloquized Matthew as he turned it over and re-read it.

"Well," suggested Billy scratching his head, "if I

was you I'd file it."

Matthew looked at him in surprise. "You'd what?"

"I'd file it. Put it in here," and Billy picked up one of the letter files which lay on the desk.

Matthew's face brightened and he heaved a sigh of

relief.

"Oh, yes, I see, for future reference."

He passed it over to the boy who proceeded to file it, remarking to himself as Matthew picked up another letter: "I was sure I could run this business if I had a chance," then, aloud, as he noted a puzzled expression on Matthew's face: "Is that another to be filed?"

"No, I think I'll answer this."

"What does he want?"

"I'll read it to you." And again he read: "Matthew Brent, Dear Sir:—Ten months ago I bought five hundred shares of the Brent Sugar Refinery Company stock at one thirty. I have received but one dividend, whereas,

other sugar stock has been paying quarterly dividends of five percent. Either send me another dividend or take the stock off of my hands. You may have it for one forty. Signed, Silas Flint."

"Say, he's a real financier," declared Billy. "We ought

to have him on our payroll."

"He may be a financier," declared Matthew, "but I don't like the tone of his letter. I'll write him. Is there pen and ink handy?"

"Oh, I'll take your letter, Mr. Brent," said Billy.

"What?" ?

"I say I'll take your letter for you," and Billy picked up a notebook from the typewriter desk.

"You mean on your typewriter?"

"Yes; just tell it to me and I'll write it out for you." Matthew eyed the youth suspiciously.

"I'm not sure," he said slowly, "that I care to have you

know what I say."

"Oh, that's all right," replied Billy quickly, "I've done plenty of your brother's letters."

"What? You've written letters for Simon?"

"Sure! Why if Mr. Simon had lived, I'd have got somewhere. He was interested in me."

"Then you must know something about this business?"

"You bet I do! I know a lot more than some folks

give me credit for."

All of which was more or less true. While Billy may have exaggerated his own importance, it is nevertheless true that during the last months of his life, Simon Brent had taken a great interest in Billy, possibly because Mary did. In his quizzical way he would ask the young man questions, just to hear his sharp answers—for self-assurance was Billy's greatest asset.

Matthew rubbed his chin thoughtfully as he observed

Billy with an expression most benign.

"You wouldn't consider that you were betraying my brother's confidence, would you, William, by telling me

what he thought of Mr. Morris and Mr. Gage?"

"No, sir. I think I ought to. He didn't trust either one of them any further than he could see them, but Morris was the best he could do. I've heard him say that. Yes, and he had his eye on another one, sir."

"Yes? Who was that?"

"Mr. Durham. He's the coming man. He'll be a

regular Morgan some day!"

"That's just what I am afraid of!" declared Matthew with considerable fervor. "That's just what I'm afraid of. He's getting too rich," and Matthew lapsed into a reverie, from which he was awakened by Billy saying:

"If you ain't going to write that letter, you might see

the lady out in the other room."

"A lady. Bless me," and Matthew came to himself. "Show her in."

Billy disappeared into the ante-room and returned shortly, ushering in a handsomely gowned woman, who without formality, approached the desk.

Matthew arose in his chair to greet her.

"Is this Mr. Matthew Brent?" she asked.

Matthew nodded his head.

"I called to see about some stock that I purchased through this office. I should like to realize on it."

Matthew's face grew stern.

"I'm not buying any stock," he said coldly. "I'm trying to get rid of what we have."

"But I need the money," urged the woman.

"Well, I don't need the stock," was Matthew's curt reply.

"Ain't you trying to give away some of these millions?"

asked Billy in an undertone.

Matthew turned and eyed him in surprise.

"Of course. What's this got to do with it?"

"Seems to me this is a good chance to get rid of a bunch."

"How much do you want, Madam?" he finally asked.

"Twenty thousand dollars."

"What?" and Matthew's voice expressed the utmost surprise. "Twenty thousand dollars! What on earth can a woman want with twenty thousand dollars?"

The woman drew herself up proudly.

"That is my business," she said in a haughty manner. "I have been a client of this firm for years. I do not consider that I am obliged to tell why I want the money."

Matthew's face grew red and he was about to reply, but Billy came diplomatically to the rescue, remarking to the fair client:

"Mr. Brent doesn't understand, Mrs. Uptown. He means all right. I'd tell him if I was you."

"Well, for one thing," replied the client somewhat mol-

lified, "I want a new model machine."

"Machine?" snapped Matthew. "Sewing machines don't

cost twenty thousand dollars."

"Sewing machines?" exclaimed the woman, "who said anything about sewing machines? I'm talking about a touring car. That's forty-five hundred and," she continued speaking rapidly, "I need a new twenty horse-power runabout. That's two thousand. The high cost of living has increased my household expenses up to three thousand a month. I owe my milliner two hundred and my tailor nineteen hundred. I want to refurnish my cottage and—"

"Never mind the rest," broke in Matthew. "Never mind the rest. Come back in half an hour and I'll tell Morris to let you have it. William, show the lady out," and the old gentleman sank into his chair with a sigh

of relief.

Later, when Billy returned from "showing the lady out," he said with considerable severity: "Wiliam, let this be a warning to you never to marry."

"All right, sir; but she's one of Mr. Brent's regular customers and I knew you'd want to acommodate her.

Now how about the letter, sir?"

"Oh, yes," picking up the letter, "my mind wandered a little." He slowly began to dictate: "Mr. Silas Flint, Dear Sir:—In reply to your valued communication—" he stopped and looked at Billy. "I thought you were going to write it on the typewriter?"

"I take it down in my notebook first."

"What, are you a stenographer?" with the accent on the 'graph'.

"Sure."

"You don't say so. In my days stenographers drew good salaries."

He surveyed the boy over his spectacles. "How much

do you get?"

Billy hesitated ere he replied: "Well, not as much as I'd like. You know that while your brother was a fine man, he was pretty close."

"Yes, I know; but how much do you get?"

"Twelve fifty per!"

"Per what?"

"Per week, to be sure. I ought to get at least seventeen fifty."

Matthew leaned back in his chair and eyed the boy

earnestly.

"Do you mean to say that for this kind of work you only get twelve dollars and a half a week—and this estate valued at a billion?"

"That's it, sir. I know I ought to have a raise, but I wouldn't ask Morris for it if I never got it."

Matthew drew a piece of paper toward him and for

several minutes figured slowly. At length raising his head he said:

"After this your salary will be just eight times that."
Billy's chin dropped and his eyes fairly bulged out of
his head.

"W-What?" he stammered. "Eight times that? You don't mean it!"

"Do I look as though I were joking?" demanded Matthew sternly. "After this your salary will be one hundred dollars a week as long as you help me in disposing of this estate."

Billy's face paled and his hand shook so he could hardly hold his pencil. He would have made some reply had he been able. As it was the thought flashed through his mind that Matthew certainly was insane, but before he could speak the old gentleman continued dictating and Billy took it down as follows:

"In reply to your valued communication, permit me to say that I think your claim unwarranted. As for the stock—as for the stock—" he paused and thought earnestly. "What about the stock, William?" he finally asked.

Without even stopping the movement of his pencil, the boy continued aloud. "Kindly deliver same to my office. We will be glad to take it at one forty, the price named in your letter."

"But I don't want the stock, William," insisted Matthew.

"That's all right," was the young man's quick reply. "He won't bring it. It's quoted at one forty-two this

morning. Is that all?"

"No. As long as we are at it, I think we had better answer some more of these," indicating the pile of letters. "It doesn't seem so hard, does it?"

"Sure not, if you only know how. What have you got

there?"

Matthew opened the letter which he had just picked up, and glanced over it for a moment without saying any-

thing, while his face brightened.

"This seems to be a little different from the others. It says," and he read: "In eighteen eighty, Simon Brent loaned my father six hundred dollars to pay off the mortgage on his farm. My father—"

The buzzer on the desk interrupted the reading. "What's that?" Matthew asked, looking around.

"It's for me," replied Billy. "Excuse me, I'll be back in a minute."

He hastily left the room while Matthew continued to read: "My father has never paid any interest and, because he was a cripple, you brother never asked him for it."

Matthew's heart warmed within him as he remarked to himself: "Well, that was kind of Simon. I'm so glad to learn of one good deed anyway."

He returned to the letter.

"The note is somewhere among your brother's papers," he read.

Again he paused and cast his eyes over the pile of files, books and papers that were stacked on the desk. Then he resumed his reading.

"The note is somewhere among your brother's papers. As he is dead, the note is of no use to him. Will you kindly have it sent back to me. Signed, Mercy Ann Strong."

Matthew shook his head: "And she never said even so much as 'thank you."

Once more his musings were interrupted by the tele-

phone, which he hastened to answer.

"Yes, this is Simon Brent's office," is what Billy heard as he came back. "What about cotton? Oh, it's cheaper? Well the cheaper the better. No, we don't want any cot-

ton. We've gone out of business." He hung up the 'phone as he noticed that Billy was waiting for something. "What is it?" he asked.

"There's a lot of people out there waiting to see you."
"To see me?"

"Yes, sir. And there's another woman."

"Like the other one?" and Matthew nodded his head toward the door through which his previous visitor had departed.

"No, sir, this one seems different. I've never seen her

before."

"Very well, show her in," and in less time than it would take to tell it, Billy ushered in a comparatively young woman dressed in black. She, too, without waiting for any greeting, walked straight up to Matthew's desk.

"I see by the papers," she exclaimed, "that you are

going to right all the wrongs done by Simon Brent."

Matthew leaned back in his chair and regarded her calmly.

"To the best of my ability, madam. What-what

wrong did my brother ever do you?"

"He promised to marry me."

Matthew leaned forward and regarded her in the greatest surprise.

"You astonish me. I didn't know that Simon ever had

time to become engaged."

"Well, he had. He was engaged to me and I demand—"

"My dear lady," stammered Matthew, "I—I—I should like to oblige you, but I'm not a marrying man. Why—why, how long ago was this?"

"Thirty years."

"As long as that? It seems impossible, you look so young."

"I'm old enough to know my rights. You've got to do

something for me or I'll make trouble."

"Madam, we don't want any trouble," urged Matthew solicitously, "and we'll do the best to right this wrong—if wrong has been done. Why didn't Simon marry you?"

"Why," she snapped, "because I married a better man

than Simon Brent ever dared to be; but he's dead."

Matthew started in surprise. "Well, so is Simon."

"I know he is, but if Simon Brent had married me I would have had all of his money. Now I haven't a dollar and I'm desperate."

She pounded the desk and eyed him fiercely.

Matthew's face grew stern and his hands clasped convulsively. If he had been in Tonga he would have called Tippo-Tib and had her taken away. As it was he didn't know what to do. Seeing from her attitude, however, that she was about to break forth again he finally exclaimed:

"Now, madam, be calm. We want no scene here. You say you haven't a dollar?"

"No, sir, not a dollar."

"Too bad! Too bad! And you say Simon never did anything for you?"

"Not a thing," and she hid her face in her hands as

though weeping.

"Not a thing," repeated Matthew, "and with all these millions."

Slowly he put his hand into his pocket and drew therefrom his old-fashioned wallet. Out of it he slowly extracted a ten dollar bill which he handed to the woman.

"Make it go as far as you can," he said. "William,

show the lady out."

The boy did as bidden, while Matthew slowly entered the amount in his memorandum book.

"I have to keep a strict account of all I pay out," he said. "But, William, I don't think I'll see the others now."

"If he don't give it away any faster than that," thought

the boy as Matthew returned the memorandum to his pocket, "I guess there'll be plenty left to pay my hundred per."

Once more the buzzer sounded and Billy left the room while Matthew leaned back wearily in his chair and cast

his eyes toward the ceiling.

"To think that Simon really had time to fall in love," he mused. "It doesn't seem possible," and again he cast his eye over the stack of papers on his desk. "It doesn't seem possible, but maybe he worked faster than I do." Then after a few moments silence: "I wonder what she looked like thirty years ago."

It was not until he stopped to contemplate what thirty years ago meant, that it slowly dawned upon him that thirty years previous his last caller could not have been more than a child in short dresses. The fact that he had been victimized was just beginning to dawn upon him, and he was getting considerably irritated when Billy entered followed by Mary. In his hand the boy carried a basket full of letters which he dumped on the desk.

"Are you awfully busy, Daddy?" asked Mary sympa-

thetically, as she came quickly over to the desk.

Matthew's face fairly beamed and for the moment he

forgot his weariness.

"Oh, no, no," he replied, "just—just a few letters to read," and he indicated with a sweep of his hand the pile that Billy had made.

"A few? I think that's an awful stack."

"Well, yes, there are a good many; but we have plenty of time. You know we're going out of business."

"Going out of business? I noticed that they looked pretty busy in the other offices as I came through. I had to come that way because of the crowd in the hall," she added with an air of great concern, as it slowly began to dawn

upon her how unfitted for the work her grandfather really was.

"Oh, yes, there's considerable work to do in settling up the estate. But what's the matter, child? You look sad," and he regarded her solicitously.

"It's about you, Daddy—and—and Arthur; I'm afraid

he isn't what I thought he was, either?"

"No," replied Matthew decisively. "I have discovered that."

Mary's face assumed a startled expression. "Daddy," she said quickly, "do you mean you have found out he

is leading a double life?"

"Exactly. I supposed he would agree perfectly with my plans about disposing of this estate; but now I find that he is as bad as Simon. He's trying to see how much money he can make. We came very near quarreling today."

"That isn't what I mean, Daddy," and Mary's voice expressed the deepest sorrow. "It's worse than that.

Worse than that, Daddy."

Matthew's face assumed an expression of much concern. "You don't tell me."

"Yes. He goes to late suppers and knows questionable

people—people he wouldn't dare let me know."

Matthew drew a deep sigh. "Men do," he said. "Men in business go to many places where they couldn't take their sisters and sweethearts."

Mary looked at him in surprise. "Why, Daddy! You never did!"

Matthew slowly rubbed his chin. "Well-well, if I did,

it is so long ago I don't remember."

He leaned back in his chair, while his eyes took on a far-away look which drew Mary's attention to his changed appearance. Laying her hand on his shoulder, she said gently:

"Daddy, you're tired. Put up your work and let's go home—away from all this business and wickedness and excitement."

Matthew raised his head slowly. "Excitement? Why, there's been no excitement here—except one poor woman—and her's was feigned."

"There's plenty of excitement outside, Daddy! I never saw so many excited people in my life. Why, I was actually afraid."

"You don't tell me," and Matthew raised himself on the arm of his chair. "What's the cause?"

Before Mary could answer, the outer door of the office flew open and admitted Durham, who turned and slammed the door behind him.

CHAPTER XXI

STARTLED by the unexpected interruption, both Matthew and Mary cast upon Durham an inquiring look as he turned the key in the lock and stood breathless before them.

"Mr. Brent," he finally managed to articulate between his gasps for breath, "have you any idea what you are doing?"

Matthew arose with great dignity. "Of course I know

what I am doing. I am investigating claims."

"That isn't what I mean," said Durham impatiently. "Do you know what you are doing in the Street—in the city—all over the country?"

"Why, no," with just a tinge of uncertainty in his

voice. "What am I doing?"

"You're creating a riot. A panic. That's what you're doing."

"Riot? Panic?"

"Yes, a panic in Wall Street and a riot on William Street. Mary, why don't you tell him? You can see it!"

Mary tossed her chin into the air and regarded the speaker frigidly.

"Excuse me, Mr. Durham, I fail to see how this inter-

ests you."

Durham's face paled and he looked at her in the utmost surprise.

"Mary, what do you mean?"

"I mean I have found out all about your double life."

"What? You've found out about my double life? What do you mean? I hope you haven't let your grandfather prejudice you against me, because—"

"Sir," interrupted Matthew sternly, "I have said

nothing to prejudice her against anyone."

"No," replied Mary, "my grandfather has said nothing

except that he was disappointed in you."

"And that I shall not allow you to marry my grand-daughter, until you have changed your views," continued Matthew.

"Also your manner of life," said Mary. "I wouldn't marry a man who attends late suppers with questionable people."

"Mary," interrupted Durham totally at a loss to under-

stand her words, "what are you talking about?"

Instead of replying Mary deliberately turned her back on him.

Durham was so completely nonplused by her action, that for the moment he could not find words to express himself. While he was gathering his wits Billy suddenly entered.

"There's a man out here says he has an appointment

with you, Mr. Brent. Says he knew Greeley."

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed Matthew, rising. "I know all about him. Show him right in, William. Show him right in." Then to Arthur: "Excuse me, Mr. Durham, "there's a gentleman coming to see me who was a friend of Horace Greeley."

With an eagerness he took no pains to conceal, Mat-

thew advanced toward the door to greet his visitor.

"The man who knew Greeley," announced Billy as he ushered in a Russian Jew, possibly thirty-five years of age, who, with smiling face and hat crushed down on the back of his head, advanced with outstretched hands.

Matthew drew back as though he had received a blow,

and without giving his visitor time to speak exclaimed in the greatest indignation: "What do you mean, sir? You never knew Horace Greeley, and you know it! Greeley died before you were born. You're an imposter. A scoundrel, a villain! Get out of my office!"

In vain did the visitor attempt to expostulate. Before he could say half a dozen words, Billy had seized him by the arm, and with a quick wrench rushed him out through the door, while Matthew sank back into his chair, wiping his face with his handkerchief.

"The imposter! The imposter!" he muttered. think he would dare do such a thing."

Although greatly amused, the seriousness of the situation caused Durham to say earnestly: "What else could you expect, Mr. Brent? Mary, can't you help bring him to his senses?"

"It is you who have lost your senses, don't speak to me!" and Mary's eyes glowed with excitement and resentment.

"Oh, very well, then," was Durham's calm replyalthough he felt anything but calm-"I see I am not needed here."

He turned to leave the room as Billy entered with another basketful of letters which he dumped on Matthew's desk.

"More claims," he said.

"What," queried Matthew, "all these?"
"Sure!" replied Billy. "How many dead beats do you think there are in New York, Mr. Brent?"

"I have no idea. Why?"

"Because that's how many letters you'll get."

"But-but, I don't understand," stammered Matthew.

"Of course you don't understand, Mr. Brent, neither you nor Mary," said Durham earnestly as he turned back and laid his hand on the aged man's shoulder. "If

you had understood you would not have done the things you have."

Matthew looked at him helplessly and was about to reply when Morris entered the room hastily.

"Mr. Brent," he exclaimed, "the market has gone to

pieces, and you are to blame for it."

"I?" exclaimed Matthew innocently, glancing first at

Morris, then at Durham and again at Morris.

"Yes, you!" Morris fairly screamed. "You have given orders for no more trading. Without our orders to steady the market, prices on grain, cotton, and provisions have gone down—"

"Well, that's good for the public," interrupted Mat-

thew.

"But such a sudden drop. It means ruin for hundreds whose money is invested," declared Durham.

"No, no!" exclaimed Matthew. "It is not so bad as

that."

"Yes, as bad as that," was Durham's response. "Worse."

"Much worse," added Morris.

During this conversation Mary had remained silent, but now that her excitement had cooled, she could not fail to see that something serious had happened. Drawing close to Matthew, she took him by the arm.

"Come, Daddy," she said, "don't you think you had

better go home and let Mr. Morris manage things?"

"Of course not," was Matthew's decided reply. "I have business to attend to. My place is here."

Billy entered and handed Durham a telegram. The

young man's face paled as he read.

"Cotton has dropped to six cents. At this rate I'll be bankrupt in half an hour. Do you hear," he cried shaking the telegram in Matthew's face, "bankrupt!"

"Well, what have I to do with that?"

"What have you to do with it? Why, your brother's mills are the largest consumers of cotton in the world and they have canceled all buying orders."

Matthew would have replied, had he not been inter-

rupted by the entrance of Duvall.

"Here's news for you," he said as he handed Morris a

telegram which he read aloud:

"The employes of the Squantuck mills declare they are the owners of the mills. They say that Simon Brent built them off of their labor and that the mills belong to them. They are sending a delegation to Matthew Brent to demand that he restore to them their property."

"What do you think of that, Mr. Brent?"

"I think their claims are just; but they must be crazy to expect that it can be done as they ask."

"No," replied Morris, "they're not crazy; but you

are."

Vigorous pounding on the outside door caused them all to start with apprehension.

"What's that?" asked Matthew as the noise increased. "There's a mob out there," declared Durham, "and

they all want to see you."

"All right!" replied Matthew rising to his feet and squaring his shoulders; "let them in! I'll see them! William open the door!"

"No, no!" cried Mary throwing herself upon her grandfather. "Don't do it. Oh, Daddy, this is awful!" Then turning to the others: "Isn't there something we can do?"

"Yes," declared Durham emphatically. "Take him away. Get him into the private elevator and take him home."

Matthew drew back with an air of dignity, which little comported with the events transpiring around.

"I refuse to go!" he said. "It is my duty to remain." "It is your duty to help us bring order out of this

chaos. The whole thing has been a mistake. Give me power to act for you and I'll do it!" said Durham in desperation.

"Not if I die for it," replied Matthew. "You'll simply

make matters worse."

"Worse? How could I make them worse?"

"By increasing these millions!" and Matthew glared fiercely at the young man.

Durham's eyes snapped.

"Can't you see," he said earnestly, "that your action is creating disaster? As a rich man you have duties which you cannot shirk! You must protect those depend-

ent upon you. Now let me help you."

While Matthew hesitated, Morris exclaimed with a note of exultation in his voice: "I don't think you need trouble about this, Mr. Durham. Miss Brent has already applied to the courts for a co-executor, who will take charge of the estate."

The words came as a thunderbolt from a clear sky.

"What!" exclaimed Matthew looking at Mary. "Applied to the courts? Mary applied to the courts? No! No! Impossible!"

"But she has," reiterated Morris.

"Who is he to be?" demanded Durham.

"Gilson Gage," was Morris's reply. He is probably

appointed by this time."

The effect of the last announcement was entirely different from what had been expected. For just a moment Matthew looked about him in a dazed manner; then turning to Mary he asked in a voice full of pathos: "Mary! Mary! Is it true? Have you let them turn you against your poor old Daddy?"

Without waiting for a reply he sank again into his

chair and bowed his head upon his desk.

In a moment Mary was at his side.

"Daddy!" she cried as she bent over him and threw her arms about his neck. "Daddy, don't do that! They told me it was the only thing to do; that you didn't understand."

"Who told you?" demanded Durham.

"Mr. Morris," replied Mary, "and he says you're not a proper adviser for grandfather."

"What? Morris told you that?"

"Yes," answered Mary through her tears. "He says you are a bad man. That you are leading a double life.

Oh, Arthur, how could you do it?"

"Do it? Do what?" was Durham's fierce demand. "I haven't done anything and the man who says I have is a liar." He advanced toward Morris in a threatening manner. "A liar!" he repeated. "A liar! Do you hear?"

Morris's face blanched and he took a step backward.

"I have no time now to waste with you. This is time for action."

His words aroused Matthew who sprang to his feet. Like Napoleon's Old Guard, he could die, but he would never surrender. The Brent blood surged through his aged veins and he exclaimed vehemently:

"You are right. It is time for action. Until we hear from the court I am master here. Mr. Morris, your

presence is no longer desired. Go!"

Morris's face flushed but he made no move to obey.

"I refuse to recognize your authority," he replied defiantly, "until I see Gage."

"Gage!" shouted Matthew now thoroughly enraged,

"Gage! Don't talk to me about Gage."

The words had scarcely left his lips when Billy entered, bearing in his hand a legal envelope which he extended to Matthew.

"From Judge Everett," he explained.

"You will have to talk about Gage!" cried Morris exult-

antly starting to take the envelope from Billy's hand.

"Here's the notice of his appointment."

"No, you don't!" said Billy as he gracefully thwarted Morris's attempt and handed the document to Matthew. "Mr. Brent, you read it."

Slowly Matthew opened the envelope and drew out the paper. With trembling hands he unfolded it and read what was written across the top.

"Notification of the appointment as coadjutor for the

estate of Simon Brent of-Wh-What's this?"

He paused and glanced around and then continued reading: "Of Arthur L. Durham."

"Impossible!" fairly shouted Morris springing forward and snatching the paper from his hands. "Durham?"

"Oh, Theodore!" exclaimed Billy. "I must have writ-

ten in the wrong name."

Morris turned upon him as though he would annihilate him. "You little snake!" he hissed. "I'll strangle you!"

"You'll do nothing of the kind," declared Durham, quickly interfering and taking the paper from Morris's hand, "and if I hear any more from you, I shall tell what I know about the death of Simon Brent."

Without a word, but with a look of extreme hatred which seemed to include every one present, Morris left the room while Durham, turning to Matthew, said firmly:

"Mr. Brent, this appointment is not of my seeking."

"I can see that," replied Matthew in a trembling voice as he slowly resumed his seat, "but it may be for the best."

"But, Daddy, I don't trust him! I can't trust him," and Mary's attitude was expressive of her words.

Without replying, Durham coldly folded the document he held in his hand and put it into his pocket.

"You'll have to trust me, Miss Brent," he said. "I will

save you in spite of yourself."

He took the telephone from the desk, while Mary fell

on her knees at her grandfather's feet exclaiming: "Oh,

Daddy, we are so helpless."

Matthew made no reply, but sat as one stunned, mechanically patting the girl's shoulder as when she knelt at his knee in childhood, the while he listened to Durham as he ripped off his orders to the various brokers and between

calls dictated telegram after telegram to Billy.

"Buy cotton at ten—all that's offered! Buy a hundred thousand March wheat at two dollars! Take all gilt-edged securities offered at yesterday's opening price! Loan at two percent., to the limit, account of the estate of Simon Brent!" were some of the orders with which Durham startled the Street. To the superintendent of the cotton mills he wired: "Court in charge of Simon Brent estate. If employes do not return to work in morning, close down." Then calling up the *Planet* he said to Duvall:

"Announce the action of the court in an "Extra" and say that Matthew Brent is about to return to Tonga."

"Yes, to Tonga!" echoed Matthew as Durham set down the 'phone. "To Tonga: that's the place for me. Come, Mary, let us go!"

"What," she said, "and leave the settling of the estate

in Arthur Durham's hands? Never!"

For a moment Durham made no reply. Then he quickly

took from his pocket the court order.

"What I have done," he said, "I have done to save both you and your grandfather from his folly. I now resign the trust which came to me unasked."

Without more words he slowly tore up the paper and

scattered the pieces on the floor.

"If at any time you need my further help," he continued,

"send for me. Until then, goodbye."

He opened the door, through which the police could be seen driving the false claimants out of the building, and disappeared down the elevator.

CHAPTER XXII

ARY was never able to tell exactly what happened during the next few minutes, nor how she succeeded in avoiding the mob that surged about the building.

Durham had hardly left the office ere she regretted her words; but her pride would not allow her to call him back. In her extremity, she turned to Billy. The manner in which that dapper youth arose to the occasion proved

him a young man of ability and discretion.

With the aid of a couple of hastily summoned policemen, Matthew was smuggled down the private elevator, placed in a waiting taxi and driven home. He was completely crushed. The sense of the great responsibility laid upon him and his helpless inability to fulfill its obligations had broken his spirit. The discovery of Morris's duplicity had been the last straw in his case, as it had been in Simon's.

For days after his last experience, Matthew remained absolutely secluded, unmindful of the fact that the great business interests must go on and that some one must direct them. He seemed stunned by the magnitude of events and the discovery that he had not the strength to carry out his intentions in this matter, as he had always been able to do heretofore. He was, in fact, very near to a complete physical and mental collapse. He was paying the penalty of attempting a work, which was not his to do.

To express it in a somewhat paradoxical manner, Mat-

thew was suffering from his wrong sense of right. The hopelessness of the situation, in so far as he was concerned, lay in his refusal to admit that he might be wrong.

"I know I am right," he insisted over and over again,

"and no one can change my opinion."

When the force of the blow gradually began to pass away and Matthew began to regain a little of his wonted manner, his mind naturally reverted to affairs at the office; but he absolutely refused to go near the place.

"If I am able to work at all," he told Mary, "it will have to be amidst more harmonious surroundings. I'll

find some other place."

Then it was that the Brent in Mary really began to assert itself.

"If Daddy is too sick to work and Arthur is false," she mused, "to whom can I turn?"

Presently her thoughts flew back to her Uncle Simon. "How did Uncle Simon manage all this great business?" she wondered. "He couldn't do it all himself," she reasoned. "He must have had good employes. Some of them must still be good. Why can't I use them and wind up this estate myself?"

That there were probably legal obstacles to this method of procedure she did not understand; therefore, having within her that which made her naturally independent, she determined to follow out this mental suggestion.

The first to whom her thoughts turned was Billy.

"Young as he is, he has never failed me yet and I'm sure he will not fail me now," was her mental argument; and she forthwith summoned him to her assistance.

Unwittingly she took a most wise step. Not only was Billy absolutely loyal to Mary and what he believed to be for her best interests, but his smiling face and breezy manner proved a veritable tonic to both Mary and her grandfather. "Who is looking after the office now that Mr. Morris is out?" was Mary's first question.

"Oh, Morris is still there," was Billy's surprised reply,

"but-"

"What?" interrupted Matthew. "There after I discharged him?"

"Why, he didn't know he was discharged. He thought you just ordered him out of the room; but he's only playing second fiddle now. Prichard is in charge."

"Prichard?" and Matthew showed still greater surprise. "He told me he'd have nothing to do with settling

the estate."

"That's just Prichard's way, Mr. Brent. You have to know how to handle him; that's all. When Judge Everett asked him to look after things until you were able to be around, he was glad to do it."

"Oh!" was Mary's relieved exclamation. "Then it

really is Judge Everett who is managing affairs?"

"Well, in a way," was Billy's evasive reply. "You see, next to Prichard and me, Judge Everett, being your uncle's lawyer, knew most about his business. He's just

seeing that nobody makes any mistakes."

Mary was now certain that she had acted wisely. With two such reliable assistants as Judge Everett and Billy, and with Prichard in charge at the office, she was sure she could wind up her uncle's estate, if her grandfather would only permit.

While she was thinking how she might win his consent to her plan, Matthew was lost in his own reflections.

"How would it do, Mary," he finally asked with some hesitation, "if we were to leave Prichard in charge of the office down town and I was to make my office right here?"

Mary and Billy regarded him in mild surprise, but ere they could speak, he continued: "As I told you before, it is too disquieting down town for me. There are too many interruptions. Now, if I could have the mail sent up here to me, with William's help in writing my letters, I am sure I could eventually divide the estate without disturbing anyone. Of course, it will be a big job, and I am right sorry that Arthur wouldn't stay and help me; but—"

"I wouldn't allow him to help you!" Mary interrupted. "I have no confidence in him. He leads a double life.

Mr. Morris said so."

"Morris!" was Billy's explosive utterance. "You wouldn't believe anything Morris told you, would you?"

Mary gave the youth a startled glance.

"Well—well, not unless I had other proof; but Arthur admitted he had two sides. Anyway, we'll have to get along without him now. I shall go and see Judge Everett this afternoon."

When Mary called upon the attorney, she was agreeably surprised at the readiness with which he fell in with her plans. To be sure, he looked a bit sceptical when she declared that she could manage the estate as well as her Uncle Simon, but that was to be expected.

"As long as Mr. Durham has refused to do anything more," she said, "I can't see what else I can do. Of course," she added, "I am very glad he had the decency to quit, as he knows I have no confidence in him. With two

such good advisors as you and Billy, and-"

"I don't think you quite understand," said Judge Everett, breaking in upon her. "While this is all to be yours some day, there are certain legal formalities to be complied with before you can take over the entire management. If I had such a good friend—"

"Such a good friend?" interrupted Mary, and there was a snap in her eyes that recalled Simon Brent.

"Whom do you mean?"

"Why-why-the court, to be sure," and the attorney,

seeing that he was treading on dangerous ground, buried his face deep in the papers on his table, while he added slowly: "Yes, the court will see that nothing illegal is done."

"Oh!" and Mary heaved a deep sigh.

"As matters now stand," Judge Everett continued, "the court is in charge of the estate. Whatever you do, must be with the sanction of the court. It will always be necessary for you to get the written approval of your grandfather to any plan you may have for settling the estate, so I can see that you will have to be very diplomatic."

"Oh, I can see that," was the prompt reply, "but I do not think it is going to be as hard to manage Daddy as it was before his last experience. He is much changed. I do wish you would come out and see him. It would do him

so much good!"

Judge Everett promised that he would try, and Mary took her departure, going directly from the offices of the lawyer to those of her uncle. There she was warmly received by Prichard, who had already been advised by Judge Everett to manifest no surprise at what she might say.

"I will explain later," the lawyer had 'phoned. "All you

have to do for the present is to agree with her."

Prichard was considerably puzzled by the message, but when Mary unfolded to him her intention of managing the business herself, it was with the greatest difficulty that the aged clerk could refrain from laughing outright.

In spite of his amusement, however, he was greatly

pleased.

"She's a Brent all right," he thought, as he listened in silence to what she had to say. "Just put a few more years on to her head and Simon won't have any cause to worry—wherever he is."

When she had finished her talk, Prichard said with the utmost gravity; "I'll have your private office put into shape for you at once. It's just as Matthew left it."

Mary laughed merrily.

"I'm not going into the business that deep," she said; "at least for the present. Daddy and I will keep out of the way and let you and Judge Everett manage things here. But," and she shook her finger in the old clerk's face, "I'm going to keep my eye on you to see that you don't try to make any more money; so you'd better look out."

Prichard rubbed his hands together as he chortled under his breath: "That's just the way your Uncle Simon used to talk. Oh, you're a Brent all right! You're a Brent all right!"

As she was leaving the offices, Mary encountered Morris, who had been on the watch for her ever since he knew she was in the building. She would have passed him with a simple "good afternoon," but he stopped her with a word.

"I am very sorry for what happened the other day," he said in his most dignified manner. "I feel that it is but just that you should know that what I did was solely for your interests."

Mary acknowledged his explanation with equal dignity.

"I should like to think so, Mr. Morris," was her quiet rejoinder, "but events hardly corroborate your words."

"Because I was thwarted in my efforts, Miss-Brent. Had Mr. Gage been appointed to aid your grandfather, you can see how much better it would have been. Now, he is left with no advisor."

"You mistake! Judge Everett is acting as his advisor."
"Which is all very well in a legal way; but Judge
Everett is not a financier. There isn't a man on the
Street today who is as well qualified to manage your

affairs as Gilson Gage. I am not criticising Arthur Durham, but he is a young man—"

"It is quite unnecessary to mention Mr. Durham," was Mary's chilling interruption, and she swept out of the offices, leaving Morris in open-eyed astonishment.

"Can it be possible that Durham has lost out?" he

muttered, as he returned to his desk.

For some minutes he remained there silently thoughtful. Then he came to his feet with a bound.

"It must be so!" he exclaimed under his breath. "It must be so! What a fool I was not to see it before. I

must see Gage and open his eyes, too."

Opening a secret drawer in his desk, he took therefrom the little book upon which he had made his notations the day Durham was appointed co-executor. As he glanced over its pages a self-satisfied smile spread itself over his face, while about the corners of his mouth there came

the shadow of a malicious purpose.

"I may have failed to become secretary of the treasury," he said to himself as he took his hat and left the office, "but if Matthew and the girl persist in making fools of themselves, there is no reason why I should not feather my nest. If they are determined to give away Simon Brent's millions, I might as well have some of them."

CHAPTER XXIII

CILSON Gage was far from affable when Morris entered his office that afternoon. He was still smarting from the wound inflicted upon his pride by Morris's fiasco in the appointment of a co-executor, and he took no pains to conceal his anger. He acknowledged Morris's greeting with a growl and the point blank question:

"What do you want here?"

Ordinarily Morris would have replied in kind, but he was too astute a schemer to allow his feelings to rob him of his prey. His answer was, therefore, in strict consonance with his plans, as he said with becoming deference:

"Just a little friendly call, Gage. I thought you might be interested in knowing how the game was progressing."

"It's of no interest to me, whatever. I'm entirely out of the game, as you call it. In the next game I play, it will be with a partner who has at least ordinary intelligence."

"Yes?" and Morris smiled in a tantalizing manner. "I thought it would be of considerable interest to you to know that Durham has finally queered himself with Miss Brent."

"What's that?"

There was no lack of interest in the query, as Gage looked up from the document with which he had pretended to busy himself.

"So it does interest you?" laughed Morris. Gage shrugged his shoulders. "In a way, yes."

"It should interest you in every way, if you are as

anxious for the girl and old Simon's millions as I think."

"I can't see how this is going to help me. You spoiled

all my chances with your infernal blunder."

"Now don't be so quick to jump at conclusions," was Morris's soothing reply. "Can't you see that Durham's failure to please the girl and her grandfather may easily be turned to your advantage? It will prove the wisdom of my advice in selecting you. In fact, I told Miss Brent so not half an hour ago."

"What?" and Gage's face assumed a more friendly expression. "You told her that?"

"I certainly did. I'm free to confess that I wasn't thinking of you at all when I did it; I was only trying to square myself. I could see that the words impressed her, and I am satisfied that she will be glad to see you. I told her that while Judge Everett was the proper legal advisor, there wasn't a man in the city who could advise her along financial lines as well as you. Now, all that is necessary, is to create the opportunity."

"Well," exclaimed Gage when Morris stopped as though awaiting some indication of how his words were being received, "why don't you go on? Have you any

idea how such an opportunity may be created?"

"A very good one," was the slowly spoken reply.
"Well, what is it? Why don't you say what's on your mind and not spend my time beating about the bush? There's been altogether too many misunderstandings between you and me because you expected me to guess what was in your mind. Now speak up, if you know how."

Morris's face flushed; but he made no sign that he resented Gage's words, other than in the change of his

voice as he said bluntly:

"If you were as smart as you think you are, I wouldn't always have to speak so plainly. You'd have sense enough to see some things. Of course I have a plan, or I

shouldn't be here, and you know me well enough to know that I am not helping you because I love you. It's because I need you. I—"

"Oh, you want to use me, do you?" interrupted Gage. "Certainly I do—just as you want to use me. As old Col. Dingee used to say, it's quid pro quo; you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours. You want the girl and her millions. I want just one of those millions and I want to revenge myself upon Durham. That's the plainest English I am able to use. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand; and it's about what I expected."

"Well, do you agree?"

"Why should I give you a million?"

"In order to get the others—provided you can stop Matthew and the girl from giving them away to someone else. It's my commission."

Gage shrugged his shoulders as he said with a sneer: "A matrimonial brokerage, huh? Well, that's about your size. Let's hear the plan."

"Then you agree?"

"There seems to be nothing else to do."

Morris chuckled in a manner that said as plainly as words could have said it, "I thought so," and then he

took from his pocket the little memorandum book.

"Neither of us have time right now to go into the details of my plan," he finally said, "but in this little book," and he ruffled the leaves under his thumb, "are the details of most of the questionable deals in which Simon Brent was implicated during the twenty-five years I was with him. Do you understand?"

Gage's face took on an expression of surprise, which was speedily followed by one of greedy and crafty intelligence. For the moment he had been startled out of himself, and his real self cropped to the surface. Quickly, however, his face assumed its wonted cynical look as he

replied nonchalantly: "I'd be a fool if I didn't. Especially," he added, "knowing you as well as I do."

It was a nasty cut, but he couldn't help saying it.

Greedy as he was and tricky, Gage hated a traitor.

Morris winced, but his only reply was that honors were easy and there was no use wasting any more time. Two minutes later he took his leave, with the understanding that he would meet Gage at that gentleman's apartment at nine o'clock that evening, when he would explain the details of the plot.

The engagement was kept, with the result that a few mornings later Matthew received two letters, which demanded almost immediate attention. One reached him by special delivery and the other came in the regular mail

a few hours later. The first was as follows:

Bridgeport, Vt. March 10.

Mr. Matthew Brent, Executor Estate Simon Brent, New York City.

Dear Sir:-My attention has just been called to your announcement, published some weeks ago, that you were anxious to right the wrongs done by your brother. I think I can honestly say I am one entitled to consideration.

When the Squantuck cotton mills were first started twenty-five years ago, my husband was one of the incorporators, owning, as I know, 25 per cent of the stock. He gave in payment therefor the land upon which the plant now stands. During the panic of '89 he was compelled to sacrifice his stock, which Simon Brent

bought at 20 cents on the dollar.

But that is not the worst. In order to help save the company, my husband Laned it \$100,000, taking as security a mortgage on the entire plant. In the midst of the financial disturbance my husband died. His estate was found to be hopelessly insolvent. Simon Brent was the chief creditor and got practically all there was left. A year later I found the mortgage among some papers left, by chance, in an old coat pocket. It had never been recorded. Because of this, I have never been able to obtain any payment, and the claim was finally outlawed. It is still, however, a moral claim and I think it should be paid with the

I am seventy years old and an invalid, unable to come to

you, but I am writing to Mr. Gilson Gage, a friend who knows about the transaction, as does also your manager, Mr. Morris. I have three granddaughters to whom the money should go. We are all in greatly reduced circumstances, but I am not asking for charity. I am asking only what is my due.

Very truly yours, Amanda C. Blackford.

P.S. My husband was Winfield T. Blackford, for many years a prominent banker here.

The second letter was from Gage. In it he said that he had just received a letter from Mrs. Blackford, in which she told of her intention to write the letter to Matthew, and asking that he, Gage, would see Matthew and explain the case. He therefore asked an appointment.

Over both letters Matthew was greatly pleased.

"It just goes to prove my position," he declared. "Simon has always been taking advantage of the power of his money to rob others and make more for himself."

"I can't believe it," was Mary's reply. "I don't believe Uncle Simon ever robbed anyone. He was too good," and

her eyes filled with tears.

So pronounced was Mary's attitude and so apparent her grief over his accusation of Simon's dishonesty, that Matthew was moved to say: "Well, maybe he didn't rob anyone; but he certainly used the power of his money to pile up more millions. To me this is quite as reprehensible. Don't you think so, William?"

Immediately Billy hedged.

"I don't think I have had enough experience in moneygetting to qualify me as an expert, Mr. Brent," was his breezy rejoinder. "Certainly no one can accuse me of being a profiteer."

"No, William, I am sure they can not." Then after a pause: "Do you happen to know anything about this

Blackford matter?"

"No, sir. That must have happened about the time

I was being born. I do remember, however, that about a week before he died, Mr. Simon Brent wrote a short letter to a woman by the name of Blackford. It may have been the same."

"Do you remember what he said?"

"Not exactly. It was not much, for your brother did not write long letters. I think he said he was tired of hearing about something which never was anything to start with. I can find you the copy the next time I'm down town."

"I wish you would, William; and you might have Prichard go through the books and see what he can find." Then to Mary: "Don't you think you had better write Mr. Gage to call?"

"Why, of course, Daddy. If this poor woman has really been kept out of anything that belongs to her, we

must make it right."

The letter was dispatched, and a couple of days later Gage drove out to the house, where he was received with

studied courtesy.

"I have felt considerable delicacy in taking up this matter," he explained to Mary and Matthew, "in view of the false position in which I was placed by Morris's blunder. As Miss Brent knows, I consented to the use of my name solely on her request. How Morris ever—"

"No apologies are necessary," declared Matthew, breaking in upon Gage's explanation. "The less said about disagreeable subjects, the better. This matter of Mrs. Blackford's, however, proves my position. If her claim is a just one, I want to see that she gets every cent that is justly due her."

"There can be no doubt about the justice of the claim,

Mr. Brent. The only question is the amount."

"What does she figure it?"

"The mortgage was for \$100,000. There is twenty

years' interest, which, at six per cent. would be another \$120,000. Mrs. Blackford thinks she should have something on the original investment, but I do not think she could justly ask that."

"I think she could!" was Matthew's emphatic reply.

"I___"

"Daddy," interrupted Mary, "don't you think Mr. Gage ought to be the better judge. He is representing Mrs. Blackford."

"Not at all! Not at all! I've had Prichard look up the history of the Squantuck Mills. The company was originally capitalized for \$200,000. Mr. Blackford put in his property for \$50,000. Today, they tell me, the plant is worth \$2,000,000. Besides this, it has easily made in the last fifteen, or eighteen years more than ten millions of dollars. Why, this woman ought to have at least one fourth of that, besides the mortgage and interest."

"Oh, no, no, Mr. Brent!" gasped Gage. "That would be preposterous!"

"Not at all!"

"And of course there might be some mistake about the whole matter," Gage continued, not at all pleased at the eagerness with which Matthew wished to dispose of money he had hopes of controlling. "You know your brother always refused to acknowledge the claim."

"Publicly, yes; but look at this," and Matthew held out a carbon copy of the letter to Mrs. Blackford to which

Billy had referred.

Gage took the letter from Matthew's hand and read what Simon had dictated. It was brief and to the point.

"Dear Madam:—I am tired of being bothered about a claim, which never was a claim. I refuse to discuss the matter," was what Gage read.

He glanced up at Matthew and was about to speak,

but Matthew indicated a line at the bottom, beneath the space left for the signature—a line in Simon's own hand, and evidently added to make it a complete copy.

"Read that, too," he said.

This is what he read: "Enclosed, find my check for \$15,000. Divide it among you. It is all you will ever get."

Gage's face indicated the surprise he felt.

"Well, what do you think of that?" asked Matthew, while Mary eagerly awaited his answer.

"It does look as though he recognized the justice of the claim, doesn't it?" said Gage after a moment's silence.

"It surely does; and I have no doubt there are many more persons whom he defrauded in a like manner. Poor Simon! Poor Simon!" and Matthew shook his head sadly. "Yes, and poor Mary. It is such a blow to her. She can't believe it."

"No," exclaimed the girl, "I can't, nor I won't, until I have better proof than this."

"Have you asked Morris about it?" enquired Gage. "Mrs. Blackford wrote me he knew all about it."

"I have very little confidence in Morris," was Matthew's

reply. "I have asked Prichard to investigate."

Gage shook his head, as he replied with a deprecatory smile: "I think I should have less confidence in Prichard. He's so old he is almost senile, and he never could see any wrong in anything Simon Brent did. Morris may not think as you do, Mr. Brent, but he is an astute business man. I should certainly have him investigate this matter."

Matthew shook his head.

"Why not, Daddy?" asked Mary. "You want to get at the truth of this matter, don't you?"

"Yes; but somehow I feel I should trust Prichard.

I'll have to think it over."

"And you had also better take my advice about the amount of the claim, Mr. Brent," Gage insisted. "It is right to be just to Mrs. Blackford, but you must likewise be just to your granddaughter."

"Yes, I can see that. Arthur made that plain to me."
"Arthur?" and Gage spoke the name with surprise.

"You mean Durham?"

"Yes."

"I thought you had decided not to follow his advice

any longer."

"We have!" declared Mary, without giving her grandfather time to speak. "We have put him out of our

thoughts entirely."

"Yes," Matthew affirmed, "we have put him out of mind. Mary has no confidence in him. He gave me that advice back in Tonga," and Matthew's eyes took on a faraway look as he spoke the name. "Tonga!" he repeated. "How long ago that seems. I sometimes wonder if there is such a place."

Again he stopped and closed his eyes, while Mary

looked over at Gage and slowly shook her head.

Aloud she said: "Daddy hasn't been strong for a few days, Mr. Gage. I think we had better let this matter rest for a little while until it can be fully investigated. When it is, I will let you know. In the meantime we shall be pleased to have you call at any time. I am sure Daddy will be glad of your advice in his arduous task."

"I shall be only too glad to assist you at any and all times, Miss Brent; either you or your grandfather. I am indebted to you for many favors, and nothing would give

me greater pleasure."

There was so much of truthfulness in his words that Mary could not fail to be impressed. Their earnestness even aroused Matthew from his reverie and caused him to echo Mary's thanks and to second her invitation to call.

Not for a single instant did it enter the minds of either of these two simple souls that they were being made the victims of a deeply laid plot of greed and ambition!

As for Gage, he left the house some minutes later with a feeling of great elation, and firmly convincd that it was only a matter of time when the mantle of Simon Brent would rest upon his shoulders. Neither did he fail to grasp the opportunity and avail himself of Mary's invitation. Having discovered how easily Matthew seized upon any suggestion for scattering the wealth left by Simon, Gage then and there determined that he would turn this knowledge to his own selfish benefit; and so he managed to find excuses for almost daily calls.

The first time he called, it was to take Matthew for a

drive.

"You told me your grandfather was not feeling strong," he explained to Mary. "A drive will do him

good."

Mary speedily agreed and Matthew was induced to take his first airing in a couple of weeks. The following evening he called to enquire after his health and to compliment Matthew upon his wisdom in making his office in his home.

"It must have been an inspiration," he declared.

"It was," Mary affirmed. "Judge Everett says it is the very best thing he could have done."

"Indeed? And does Judge Everett come out for con-

sultation?"

"He has been out once; but either Billy or I act as the go-between," laughed Mary. Then, as Matthew's attention was diverted by Tippo-Tib; "I am really the manager, Mr. Gage—that is as much as I legally can be."

"I understand, Miss Brent; and I must compliment both you and your grandfather. I have been quite surprised at the sound judgment and good business methods I have noted in the conduct of such of your affairs as are

public property."

"I do not feel that I can take any credit for that," was Mary's blushing reply. "Up to the present I have done little, but with such a good counselor as Judge Everett and such a friend as you, I hope to do more in relieving Daddy of his burden."

"I am flattered at being so classed, Miss Brent. Do not hesitate to call upon me for anything." Then as an after thought: "Has Prichard reported on the Blackford

matter?"

"Not fully," replied Matthew, who had turned just in time to hear the question. "He is under the impression that a compromise was once suggested by Mrs. Blackford's lawyer; but he can not find the letter."

"Oh, well," said Gage as he arose to depart, "I am sure the matter will come out right. There is no hurry; so do

not worry."

The word compromise had given Gage an idea. In conversation with Morris that evening, he began to develop it. Why waste a whole million?

"Did you know that Mrs. Blackford had once offered to compromise this matter?" he asked, expecting to surprise

his confederate.

"What a question," was the calm reply. "Of course I do."

"It may spoil our plans."

"How can it? I have the letter."

Gage thought fast.

"Why," he explained, "Prichard has recalled the offer and it, of course, suggests that the claim is not so just as I have assured Miss Brent that it was. I have just discovered that she is really directing affairs, and she isn't at all keen about paying out a couple of hundred thousand, let alone a million. When Judge Everett comes to look into the matter, conditions may be worse. I think the time is ripe to bring the thing to a head."

"Isn't that what we are trying to do?"

"Why, of course."

Morris observed Gage closely for several moments.

"Look here, Gage," he finally said, "you haven't been very explicit about this whole matter. Don't forget that I can hurt you just as much as I can help you. Now give me the bottom facts."

"Why," explained Gage in an off-hand manner, in order to make half-truths appear like whole, "it is just as I told you. Brother Matthew is for paying the whole hundred thousand with interest, and possibly something more. The girl isn't. I told you about the fifteen thousand, didn't I?"

Morris nodded his head.

"Of course that had its weight; but this offer of a compromise is bad. If I were you I would go at once to the widow Blackford and show her the letter. The lawyer is now dead, so she can get no more information on that score. Tell her it has just come to light and may spoil the whole plan. Tell her you will give her twenty-five thousand dollars for her claim and take all the chances. I'm sure we shall finally settle on more than \$220,000, and that will leave you a clear \$200,000."

Morris smiled cynically.

"How nice!" was his sneering comment. Then after a pause: "Either you are losing your cunning or you are playing double."

"What do you mean?" and Gage bristled up like a game

cock.

"Just what I say. If you have put this matter to Matthew Brent as I am sure you are able, he has made no objection to paying even five times the claim. I know him, and I warn you I am not to be trifled with."

Morris's guess was so nearly what had really been the facts, that Gage's only escape lay in assuming great

indignation.

"Your insinuations are contemptible?" he exclaimed, "and did I not understand how much you have counted on feathering your nest out of this game, I would not stand for any such accusations. I've done the best I could without queering myself with the girl—a thing I am not going to do just to pull your chestnuts out of the fire! I consider \$200,000 a good price for the little you have done for me."

Morris attempted to speak, but Gage stopped him with

a gesture.

"However, to show you I am willing to help you make a killing, when it will not injure my chances with Mary, I'll let you in on a little deal I propose to put through myself."

"You may remember that a year or so ago some man claimed to be the inventor of the chilling process used by the Mahoning Steel Company and that he had been

swindled out of his patent by Simon Brent."

"Very well; but it wasn't true."

"Just the same I am going to tell the story to Brother Matthew and suggest that the claim be given a proper investigation. I will suggest further that during the investigation the mills close. If Matthew doesn't want the workmen to suffer, he can give them four months vacation

with pay.

"The Brent estate owns fifty-four percent. of the Mahoning stock, which is today worth double its par value. Twenty hours after the order to shut down is issued, I shall be able to buy up most of the stock at my own price. Later, I'll get Brother Matthew to sell me his stock and then we will start up again. You can make the rest of your million out of this."

Morris pulled at his closely-cropped moustache, but made no reply.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Gage.

"I'm afraid it won't work."

Gage laughed aloud. "Won't work? Just you wait and see. In the meantime, get the release of that claim from the Widow Blackford. I'll see that you clean up the \$200,000, and maybe a little more."

CHAPTER XXIV

THERE is an old saying that the devil protects his own. While this is doubtless untrue, it certainly seemed otherwise in the schemes of Morris and Gage.

Further investigation by Prichard of the claim of Mrs. Blackford, produced no evidence sufficient to change Matthew's determination to give her, not only all she asked, but all that he believed she might justly claim.

Judge Everett and Mary tried to dissuade him and Gage even went so far as to declare he would not, as Mrs. Blackford's representative, accept so large an amount. He finally, however, compromised on a million dollars, agreeing to accept the amount in the stock of the Squantuck Cotton Mills Company.

Matthew thereupon issued an order upon the Metropolitan Trust Company to deliver to Gage that amount of Squantuck stock, upon the delivery of a proper quitclaim from Mrs. Blackford—a document which Morris had already secured for \$25,000.

In the matter of the Mahoning Steel Corporation, Gage's suggestion also produced satisfactory results.

Here was a claim which had been under controversy for a long time. It involved the process used by the company in chilling its product. The inventor claimed one thing, Simon had claimed another. Immediately it was mentioned to Matthew, he made up his mind that Simon must have been in the wrong.

"I was something of an inventor myself, in my younger

days," he declared in talking the matter over, "and I know how the capitalists have always been able to take advantage of the inventor's poverty. I am convinced that this is another case of injustice and I am going to see it righted. It must be one of the things Simon had in mind."

Whereupon he announced his decision and ordered that the plant close down the following week, and Gage saw that the order was made public.

The result of the announcement was all that Gage expected. Immediately the stock began to drop in price. The directors tried to see Matthew in order to dissuade him from his purpose; but he refused to see them, referring them to Prichard.

When Billy put in his appearance at the Brent residence the following morning, he bore a message to Mary from the old clerk that he would like to see her at the office. It was the first time she had been called into consultation, and she promptly responded to the summons.

She found Prichard and Judge Everett closeted in Prichard's private office.

"Here is an opportunity to assist in preventing an injustice which your grandfather would commit in the name of justice," explained Judge Everett.

Mary admitted that she did not understand.

"Why," continued the attorney, "the Simon Brent estate owns only 54 per cent of the stock. While your grandfather may think it right to destroy the value of your personal stock, he has no right to arbitrarily destroy the value of the 46 per cent owned by other men."

Mary was quick to grasp the truth of the statement.

"I'll see what I can do," she said, and hastened home. She found Matthew and Billy arguing over the same matter.

"How would you like it, Mr. Brent," Billy was saying as

Mary entered, "if someone should tear down your house on that island in the South Sea just because he owned a part of it? Wouldn't you think you ought to have some voice in the matter?"

"Why, certainly."

"Well, that's just the way with the Mahoning Steel Company. Other folks own part of the stock. If you shut down and squander a lot of money paying men who are on a vacation, you destroy the value of the other stock. Don't you see?"

Matthew stroked his chin, on which the white beard

was again beginning to grow.

"Yes, William," he replied slowly, "I can see there is some justice in what you say; but these stockholders are all rich and piling up more money. That's what I object to. Now I was much pleased with Mr. Gage—"

"Gage!" snorted Billy.

Matthew regarded him in surprise.

"Why, what do you mean, William. Mr. Gage has been giving me good advice and in his way has tried to—"

"Rats!" and Billy again exploded. "He's got you buffaloed, that's all. I wouldn't be surprised if this shutting down of the Mahoning plant was just a scheme of Gage's. I don't trust him for anything!"

Mary had stopped in the doorway to hear what Matthew might say. Now she came forward, considerably moved by the young man's words. Some way or other they reminded her of Durham, and down in her heart was a sob which had been repeating itself over and over for days.

"Oh, Arthur," was the burden of her cry, "how could

you deceive me?"

Now her sense of loneliness manifested itself in a yearning to know just what Durham would have counseled in the present condition.

"Why have you no confidence in Mr. Gage?" she asked of Billy.

"Because he's too thick with Morris. You know

Morris is a crook."

"William!" remonstrated Matthew, severely. "You

must not apply such terms to anyone."

"You might just as well call things by their names," was Billy's retort. "You know he lied about Mr. Durham. That's enough to queer him with me—even if I didn't know anything more!"

"Lied about Durham?" queried Matthew. "When?"

"When he said Mr. Durham was two-sided. It isn't so. I'd stake my life on Mr. Durham."

Mary's heart gave a throb of joy she could not re-

press, and Matthew asked with much interest:

"I wonder what's become of Arthur, William? Why doesn't he come up and see me. If he doesn't want to, he needn't see—"

"Daddy!" interrupted Mary suddenly, "let's not talk about Mr. Durham. If he has been maligned, it is his place to come and explain it to us; not for us to invite him. But about this closing down of the Mahoning plant, I think Billy is right."

"What does Judge Everett think, Mary?"

"He is much opposed to closing."

"You may all be right," was the somewhat hesitating reply, "but I am not certain. I'm sure the inventor—"

"If you are so sorry for the inventor," exclaimed Billy, breaking in upon Matthew as though the thought had just entered his mind, "why don't you hunt him up and give him a chunk of your stock? You could give him plenty and still retain the controlling interest."

Again Matthew rubbed his chin.

"William," he said slowly, "you are certainly a bright young man. Now why didn't I think of that before?"

"Why? Because Gage put something else into your head. That's why!"

For a space there was silence, while Matthew and Mary both thought deeply. Billy's answer was too plain to need explanation. It was Matthew who finally spoke.

"Mary," he said with considerable spirit, "I guess William is right and I had better countermand that order. I seem to be most too impetuous at times and considerably open to evil suggestions, don't I?"

"I'm afraid we both do, Daddy. There are some things about which we appear to know very little; but I am sure

you are doing the right thing now."

The decisions was put into effect, and when Billy returned to the office, he had the satisfaction of carrying

with him the order countermanding the shut down.

"We threw a monkey wrench into the gearing that time," was his gleeful remark as he handed Prichard the "It looks to me as though the Morris-Gage machine was likely to have a bad case of back-firing."

Matters were rapidly reaching a climax and the devil was in a fair way of losing his ability to protect his own.

Out of the whole chaotic condition, the only two who were free from all worry were Billy and Ila-Ila. Because of the new arrangement, these two young people were thrown much into each other's society, and they speedily conceived for each other the most ardent admiration. To Billy, the Tonganese girl made a powerful appeal to the Gothamite craving for daintiness and novelty; while to Ila-Ila, the snappy young American was a being entirely separate from the rest of the world. "Mister Billy" she always called him, and when in his presence she was practically oblivious of everything else.

So smoothly had run Mary's life from her first arrival in New York that she had hardly stopped to think it might have two sides. Now that deceit had seized her in

its grasp and held her like a vise, she was totally unable to recognize it for what it was. It looked to her like very truth and her awakening was thus delayed.

In spite of what Billy had said and in spite of her recognition of the power of evil suggestion, she still doubted

Durham.

"Why couldn't he have told me himself?" she cried in her grief. "When I gave him the opportunity, why couldn't he have told me about his other side. I might have forgiven him then. Now I never can."

She buried her face in her hands and, leaning upon the

window sill, sobbed bitterly.

It was thus that Ila-Ila found her.

"Missy!" she cried kneeling at Mary's feet and looking up into her half-concealed face, "what is it? Who has made Missy cry?"

"No one," was the sobbing reply. "I am just begin-

ning to learn that life is not all sunshine."

"Except in Tonga," was the soft reply, and the little

maid also heaved a sigh.

"No, not even in Tonga, Ila-Ila. Don't you remember when we were little girls, how we used to watch the shadows cast by the clouds as they swept across the fields?"

"Yes; but don't Missy remember that they always

passed away?"

"True! True, Ila-Ila, they always passed away," Mary repeated slowly. "Listen!" and she sprang from her seat and opened her writing desk. "Here is my very first attempt at writing verse. It seems as though I must have known what was going to happen," and she read from a slip of yellow paper:

Down in the meadow where daisies grow,
Dotting the green with flakes like snow,
We watch the shadows come and go

As clouds pass o'er the sun.

Like birds, to us, they seem to fly
On fleecy pinions o'er the sky,

Till in the azure they fade and die,—
The shadows' race is run.

Oh, the shadows come and the shadows go
As the clouds pass o'er the sky;
So we must know that grief and woe
Will swiftly pass us by.
For it's love that drives all our fears away—
All the fears that cloud life's sky;
And the shadows will pass.
Love will conquer at last,
'Twill be sunshine by and by.

Ila-Ila's eyes opened wider and wider until the last word was read.

"Oh, Missy!" she cried. "Is it not beautiful? It will be sunshine by and by, so Missy need not cry."

Mary smiled in spite of her grief.

"No," she said, "I need not cry, and I will not cry. I will be brave for Daddy's sake," but in spite of her brave words, she was still miserable and torn with conflicting emotions.

CHAPTER XXV

DURING all these happenings, what of Durham? When he left the Brent offices on the day he had saved Matthew from the dire effects of his own folly, he realized perfectly that his action in tearing up the notice of his appointment as co-executor was simply a bit of melodrama.

It by no means affected the order of the court.

He had been legally appointed to act jointly with Matthew, or, if he saw fit, to oppose any action Matthew might take. Nothing but further legal action on the part of the court could annul the appointment. Of course he could refuse to serve or to do anything further in assisting to save the estate and prevent a panic; but this he had no intention of doing. As he had told Mary a short time before, he would save her in spite of herself.

It never occurred to him to doubt that, when she had time to think over the events of the day, Mary would detect the lie that Morris had uttered and be glad that he, and not Gage, had been appointed to assist her grandfather. He had not reckoned with that stubbornness, which his mother had already detected and which Mary seemed to have inherited.

With these thoughts in mind, he went immediately from the Brent offices to those of Judge Everett, where the whole situation was reviewed and a plan of action mapped out, until such a time as they might be able to confer with Matthew. When two days had passed and it was evident that Matthew was not physically, or mentally able to see them, Prichard was called to meet with them.

In as few words as possible the situation was explained to the old clerk and then, too, for the first time did Durham relate the part Morris had played in the death of Simon Brent.

"In view of this," he explained, "and also in accord with Mr. Matthew Brent's words the other day, I feel that Morris should be dismissed from the employ of the estate; but for a time his knowledge of the business may be needed. I would, therefore, recommend that he be told that it is Matthew's orders that Prichard should be placed in charge of the business. I think it will be much better that he does not know anything about what I am doing, at least until I have had my status definitely settled by Miss Brent and her grandfather."

"I thought that had been settled," was Judge Everett's

surprised statement.

"So did I," was Durham's quizzical reply, "but from the little I can gain from Miss Brent's words, Morris has been poisoning her mind against me and she has not been able to detect the deceit."

"Why not go and explain?"

"I shall when the time comes. For the present, however, I shall be too busy in saving her estate, to have time for anything else; and besides," Durham added, "actions speak plainer than words. Some day she will know that my whole desire is to protect her. Then I shall explain."

"In the meantime," said Pritchard, "I shall conduct

the business just as though nothing had happened."

"Yes," from Durham, "and we'll let the general public think that Matthew Brent is going back to Tonga as soon as certain legal formalities can be perfected."

"Which reminds me," interposed Judge Everett, "that

we shall be unable to do certain things without Matthew's signature. How are we to get that? Every contract, order, or check out of the usual run of business will require both your signatures."

"We shall just have to know," Durham declared, "that

if it is right for us to have it, a way will be provided."

It was at this stage of events that Mary had telephoned

the office for Billy.

It was the first request that had come either from Mary or Matthew, although Prichard had telephoned the house daily for news of Matthew's condition. Immediately upon receipt of it, Prichard hastened to Judge Everett's office, which had been selected as headquarters for this most unusual triumvirate.

The news was received with rejoicing.

Guessing at once the object of the request, Billy was called before the three and thoroughly coached as to the information he should give. With his loyalty to Durham and his naturally quick intuition, the work was easy; and the whole plan was made just that much easier when Mary later called upon Judge Everett and expressed a desire to have a hand in managing the estate.

"I felt like a real conspirator," said the judge to Durham, in telling of Mary's call. "Yes, and I came pretty near spoiling everything. I feel confident now that there will be no more trouble. But just suppose she

had known that you were right next door?"

Durham laughed, the first really hearty laugh for weeks.

"Didn't I tell you," he said joyfully, "that if we were on the right track, a way to work out the problem would be provided? I've just begun to learn, Judge, that there is a Power that works for good to all those who are trying to do the right thing."

Judge Everett smiled at his enthusiasm.

"I discovered that a good many years ago," was his reply. "It is in strict accord with the Scriptures that 'all things work together for good them that love God.' I've been using the Bible in my business for many years."

"I'm just beginning to, and I find it a mighty good plan," said Durham soberly. "I think I'll keep it up, for if I ever needed more wisdom than is in my own head, it is

right now."

The plan having been duly perfected, Billy at once

assumed his duties.

On the ground floor of the Brent mansion was a large conservatory, one of the windows of which afforded a fine view of the river. On the opposite side, a door opened into a small paved court, which led directly to the street. This conservatory Matthew had pre-empted to his own use.

"It comes the nearest to Tonga of anything I can find in New York," he declared, "and here is where I propose to live and transact business as long as I remain—which I hope won't be long. I am going to rid myself of this burden just as fast as I can and return to a place where I can be of some service."

During these days the newspaper reporters became so persistent in their efforts to interview him, that Matthew

finally lost patience and refused to see them at all.

"If this is modern journalism," he said, "I'm sorry I ever had anything to do with it," and he forthwith sent word to Duvall that he should make arrangements to cease the publication of the *Planet* and dispose of the plant—an unwise order, which at Durham's express command, Prichard never delivered.

In the settlement of the Brent estate, Durham planned with the purpose of doing justly by all. He realized that there were some who should be provided for, and in their behalf he labored earnestly; but in view of Matthew's

most extraordinary notice to the public, he was obliged to act with the utmost severity toward those who would rob the estate.

While Durham was breezy and strictly up-to-date, there was a depth to his nature which enabled him to grasp Matthew's point of view. He could appreciate the feelings of a man, who for years had lived up to a certain theory, and he never made light of them. To the best of his ability he planned in a manner which would harmonize with Matthew's views.

To this end he outlined a policy of co-operation with the working men, whose labor had contributed so largely to the value of the industrial enterprises which made up a large portion of the Brent estate.

He evolved with Judge Everett's assistance, a plan for an equitable distribution of dividends among those who had for a number of years contributed their labor, energy and intelligence in developing the great transportation companies.

He planned boards of control for other great interests, so that those who were actually doing the work should have a voice in the manner in which these enterprises should be conducted.

While this system of administering the estate had the effect of dividing the income, it in no manner decreased the value of the estate—either to Mary, or to others whose money was invested in these enterprises. It was strictly in line with present day methods.

It was Billy's task to secure Matthew's approval of these plans—a work which he undertook with zeal, especially when he understood that Mary was in accord with the ideas, although not recognizing their source.

To illustrate, one particular case is sufficient.

Durham decided that a most meritorious way of division, was to create a trust and pension fund for the benefit of employes of the Simon Brent properties who had been ten years or more in service. He explained the plan to Billy, who in turn, suggested it to Matthew in his own inimitable way.

"Say, Mr. Brent," he remarked the morning after he had been coached by Durham, "if you want to give away a bunch of this money, why don't you pension off a lot

of these old chaps like Prichard and Morris?"

"Morris? I don't consider Morris in my employ," was Matthew's stern reply. "He is only there by sufferance."

"I know that, Mr. Brent; and I have no more use for him than you have. Still he helped your brother make some of his money. Prichard has done even more."

"I offered a share to Prichard and he said he wouldn't

have it."

"That's just Prichard's way," was Billy's stock reply. "I told you before, that you had to get acquainted with Prichard. I'll bet if you'd start some sort of a fund for all the old employes, Prichard would take his along with the rest."

"I'm pleased to hear you say that, William. Do you really think it can be done?"

"Why not invite Prichard up here and ask him?"

"Do you think he'd come?"

"Why sure. Prichard is a fine old man when you get acquainted with him, even if he does take all those

patent medicines."

"Patent medicines?" in surprise. "What's that got to do with it? I know—that is I used to know some mighty good men, who took patent medicines. I'm not sure but Horace Greeley took Hostetters' bitters. Great man, Horace Greeley. I'm sorry you don't know him, William."

"On account of the bitters, Mr. Brent?"

"Oh, no, he was a wonderful man," and Matthew closed

his eyes and heaved a sigh. "Those were great days,

William. We shall never see their like again."

"I don't know," was Billy's bewildered answer, "but if you say so, it must be so. Anyway, I know Prichard always has a bottle of some kind of dope on his desk;

but I don't suppose you mind."

"Not at all! Not at all—unless he should want me to try it," and Matthew opened his eyes with a little chuckle. "Do you know, William, I haven't taken a dose of medicine-except when some whaler touched at Tonga and I was invited aboard-for thirty years. Well! Well! How-"

"How about asking Prichard up?" Billy interrupted. "By all means! By all means—if you think he'll come."

In accordance with the plans of the triumvirate, Prichard answered Matthew's call and discussed the matter as though it were entirely new to him.

"It's a right good idea, Matthew," he finally admitted, "if it can be done legally. I'll talk it over with Judge

Everett."

The result was the Brent Endowment. The only feature of the plan upon which Matthew was immovable was its size; hence its most liberal pensions to those who come under its provisions.

There were numerous similar instances, all managed in somewhat the same way, so that Matthew appeared to himself to be the moving spirit in the direction of affairs; but with each one, his sense of responsibility increased.

It was about three weeks after this system was inaug-

urated, that the Blackford letter was received.

Billy had immediately reported the circumstances to Durham.

"And if you'll believe me," he said with an air of the deepest conviction, "Morris is back of the whole thing."

Billy suggestion was given additional weight by the

discovery that all the correspondence which Prichard well remembered had taken place anent the claim and the offer of a compromise by Mrs. Blackford's lawyer—now dead—had been removed from the files.

Morris had laid his plans well, and had it not been for the watchfulness of the triumvirate, he would have had plain sailing so long as Gage did not play him false.

It did not take Durham five minutes to reach a con-

clusion after Prichard made his report.

"Morris has evidently decided that his days with the Simon Brent estate are numbered and he is preparing to get something out of it before it is too late," was his comment upon the news. "We must immediately take steps to thwart his plans. I feel that this will afford us an opportunity to so uncover his dishonest purpose, that Mary will have to see it."

"But where does Gage come in on this?" enquired

Judge Everett.

Durham was about to make an evasive reply, when Billy blurted out: "Where does Gage come in? Why, he expects to marry Miss Brent. Ila-Ila told me so."

"How does Ila-Ila know?" asked Durham with considerable apprehension, not knowing how far matters

might have gone.

"She just knows," was Billy's decisive answer, "and Ila-Ila is nobody's fool. She says; 'Mr. Gage looks at Missy as though he would eat her;' " and he imitated the little maid's voice and manner in a way that caused Durham to laugh in spite of his apprehension.

"The detestable cur!" was Judge Everett's vigorous comment—a comment, which Durham silently endorsed.

"But why should he want to give away a million?" queried Prichard. "If he hopes to marry Simon's heir, why should he be so anxious to turn over this money to the Widow Blackford?"

"The Widow Blackford," sneered Billy. "You don't think the Widow Blackford is ever to see any of this money, do you?"

"How else can anyone get it?"

"I don't know; but there are more tricks inside of Morris's hide than there are bees in a hive. If you think the widow is likely to get any of this money, go and ask

her a few questions."

Billy's advice seemed good, and Durham decided to act upon it. The boy's estimate of Gage and Morris was also given more credence, when a couple of days later he brought down the order to shut down the Mahoning Steel Plant.

"Don't issue the order, nor tell anyone about it," was Durham's instruction to Prichard. "We'll get Mr. Brent to countermand it in a few days."

In spite of the instructions, the announcement that such an order has been issued found its way into most of the daily papers the following morning.

"How did you ever let the information leak out?"

Durham asked Prichard.

"It didn't come from me, sir."

Durham brought his fist down upon the desk with a whack.

"I see it all!" he exclaimed. "It's an attempt to lower the value of the stock! The report came from either Gage or Morris—probably from the latter—as it would have to seem to come from this office in order to be given credence; but we'll fix them!"

Durham's jaws came together with a snap, while his face—which had grown considerably older during the past month—assumed an expression of grim determination.

"Send Billy to me as soon as he comes in," was his terse command. "This thing has gone far enough. We'll bring matters to a head." When Billy made his appearance the matter was explained to him in detail and in the manner in which it seemed most likely to impress Matthew with its gravity. The result was that Matthew did see the injustice being done and the order to close down was countermanded—action which was given the widest publicity.

"If that doesn't bring on a crisis tomorrow," was Durham's mental comment as he left the office that evening, "why the refusal of the trust company to hand over

a million dollars to Mrs. Blackford will."

That which did bring matters to a climax was something on which Durham had never figured.

CHAPTER XXVI

MATTHEW was late in rising the following morning. Tippo-Tib had long since finished arranging his office and stood looking out upon the small bit of yard at the side of the house. His manner was dejected, and he appeared depressed by his surroundings.

"What a poor place is New York!" he muttered to himself. "No birds—no groves—no green fields—no blue sea washing the shore—hardly the sky above in which dwells the Great Spirit! How poor all the people are!"

A light step caused him to turn. It was Ila-Ila.

"When think you," he asked, "will the father return to Tonga?"

Ila-Ila shook her head sadly.

"No one knows. He is bound here hand and foot."

Tippo-Tib bent upon her a questioning look.

"Bound?" he repeated. "What do you mean by that? Is he not free to do as he pleases?" and the face of the islander grew black at the very suggestion that it might be otherwise.

Ila-Ila again shook her fead.

"No, Tippo-Tib, he is not free. He is bound by the wishes of a dead man."

The expression on Tippo-Tib's face changed to one of understanding. "It is so, indeed!" was the forced admission. "Can no one loose him?"

"Who can say?" and Ila-Ila heaved a deep sigh as she

turned to the window.

Tippo-Tib regarded her earnestly for a moment.

"Tippo-Tib sighs for the far-away home," he said. "Why does Ila-Ila sigh?""

The girl shook her head with a dainty shrug of her

shoulders.

"Ila-Ila doesn't know," was her smiling response. Then as she took a book from the table: "Mr. Billy hasn't come yet."

Tippo-Tib laughed—that is as much as Tippo-Tib

ever laughed.

"Mr. Billy! Ho, ho! So that is why Ila-Ila sighs," and the islander's shoulders shook with merriment. "But hush," he exclaimed as the door slowly opened, "here comes the father."

Hastily the faithful servant arranged a great chair, into which Matthew sank wearily. Clad in white and with his face again covered with a white beard, Matthew looked much as he did in Tonga, but instead of the vigor that had marked his actions there, his movements were now feeble and uncertain.

"The father is tired," said Tippo-Tib solicitously. He works too hard. He should rest."

"No! No! It isn't that, Tippo-Tib. It is not the work. My mind is heavy. The burden is too great."

Tippo-Tib knelt beside his master's chair and looked

up earnestly into his face.

"Won't the father let Tippo-Tib carry the burden?" he asked.

Matthew laid his hand affectionately upon the islander's shoulder.

"It would prove too great a burden for you as well. It is a burden that cannot be transferred. It is the burden of the rich."

"The burden of the rich?" repeated Tippo-Tib with a puzzled expression. "Riches cannot be a burden. How

can the music of the birds, the scent of the flowers and the glory of the sunshine be a burden?"

Matthew slowly shook his head.

"Ah, Tippo-Tib," he replied earnestly, "it is not that sense of riches that wearies one. It is not that wealth which comes from the Giver of every good and perfect gift' that is a burden; but the wealth that has been amassed through the lust for place and power. It is this material sense of wealth that soon becomes a burden."

"Then why does not the father lay it down?"

"Why not? Ah, there's the rub! Once you have taken up the burden, you cannot lay it down. I am daily learning that wealth carries with it duties that must needs be performed—yes, and well performed, or many will suffer.

"No, Tippo, Tib," the aged man continued after a brief pause, "until these burdens can be shifted to shoulders better fitted to bear them than mine, I must bear them. As Horace Greeley used to say—"

He stopped short, in sudden reverie, and remained thus for many moments, until Tippo-Tib quietly arose to his feet. This action aroused him and brought him back to himself.

"Great man, Greeley," he said with a deep sigh. You should have known him. Yes, you—"

His speech was interrupted by the sudden entrance of Billy, who breezed in with a cyclonic swiftness that changed the entire atmosphere of the room and the moods of those present.

"Well, here I am!" he exclaimed as he dropped his portfolio upon the table. "How is everybody this morn-

ing?" and he beamed upon the assembled trio.

"Very well, thank you, William," was Matthew's smiling reply. Then to Tippo-Tib: "Go and tell Mary that William is here."

Tippo-Tib hastened to obey and Ila-Ila started to follow, but Billy seized her by the arm and spun her around in front of Matthew.

"While we're waiting, Mr. Brent, I want you to take a look at this. Did you ever see anything finer? Well, I guess not! And I want to tell you, Mr. Brent, that Ila-Ila and I have decided to get married; haven't we, Ila-Ila?" and he held the little maid out at arms length and regarded her admiringly.

The girl made no reply, as Matthew exclaimed in some

surprise: "Is not this rather sudden, William?"

"Sudden! Haven't I been coming here nearly a month? You don't call that sudden, do you? Why, New York is full of people that have not only been married, but divorced inside of that time. Ila-Ila and I have decided we can live like plutes on a hundred per, haven't we, Ila-Ila?"

"If the good father thinks best," and the girl stood

with downcast eyes awaiting the verdict.

"I certainly have no objections," was the benign reply, "and as Rip Van Winkle used to say: 'May you live long

and prosper!"

"Fine!" laughed Billy as he bent over and kissed the girl, "and that seals the bargain. Now, then, run along. Mr. Brent and I have a lot of business this morning."

The girl obeyed and Billy drew a chair up to the table. "Business," repeated Matthew wearily. "Is that all

I have to look forward to the rest of my life?"

Billy stopped in his occupation of removing the papers from the portfolio and regarded him intently.

"What else is there, Mr. Brent?"

For a moment Matthew did not reply, but leaned forward and regarded the young man intently.

"Is that all you know, William? Business?"
"That and Ila-Ila."

"And which means the most to you, young man?"

"Which means the most to me? What do you mean?" "If you had to give up business, or Ila-Ila, which would

you give up?"

Billy scratched his head.

"Well, Mr. Brent," he finally said, "right at this minute I'd give up the business. There's plenty of good jobs I could get later on, but there's only one Ila-Ila—at least in New York."

"Nor anywhere else, for you, William," was Matthew's earnest reply. "For every man, there is but one woman. Remember that!"

"I expect you're right," and Billy drew a long breath. "I'm mighty glad I found my one so soon." Then as an after thought: "But a man's got to have business, too. He can't give that up all the time, even for the one woman."

Matthew shook his head.

"I'd be glad to give up all mine for nothing!"

"Then why don't you?" asked Billy turning upon him

abruptly.

"Because I can't. I have found out the truth of Arthur Durham's words that a rich man has duties he cannot shirk. Attending to these duties—I am just beginning to realize—is the highest idea of service. I am trying to perform my duties as best I can—and with your assistance, William," he continued a little more cheerfully, "I don't think I have done so badly. We may have made some mistakes, but we have corrected them as soon as we found them out."

"That's right, Mr. Brent. I think you have done

pretty well."

"But I shall be glad, William, when they are finished—for there is no one to whom I can turn over the affairs of the Simon Brent estate—unless it is you, William; and

I am afraid you are almost too young—although," he

added apologetically, "your advice has been good."

For just a moment Billy regarded Matthew silently. Then he asked with great earnestness: "Why don't you turn the whole business over to Mr. Durham?"

Matthew turned upon the questioner a startled look

and placed his fingers on his lips.

"S-s-s-h!" he said. "Mary won't even let me mention his name! She says she has no confidence in him, and of course I haven't either."

"Why not? Didn't he help you out of a hole when all them crooks was trying to beat you?"

"Yes, I'll have to admit that; but we don't agree. You

see he wants to make money, while I-"

"That isn't it, Mr. Brent. He just wants to keep you from making mistakes."

"Do you think so, William," and Matthew's face

assumed an expression of the deepest interest.

"Sure thing, Mr. Brent. And say," continued Billy, drawing his chair closer to his companion, "have you ever stopped to think how I've been able to give you the advice I've been giving you ever since the day you had the call from that man who knew Horace Greeley?"

"The imposter!" exclaimed Matthew: "It makes my

blood boil every time I think of him."

"That's all right—to boil; but how about this good

advice? Have you ever thought about that?"

"Oh, yes; and I think you have done well. Your ideas and mine—and more recently Prichard's, correspond exactly. I am sure we are slowly discovering how to divide the estate justly—"

"But didn't you ever wonder," interrupted Billy, "how

I—nothing but a clerk—could be so wise?"

"Why—why—I suppose there is always a right way and you just naturally see it. You've always given me

good advice, William, ever since you advised me to get

a shave. You're a smart boy, William."

"Yes; but I am not smart enough to tell you how to manage millions of dollars. No, sir! If I hadn't been told what to do by one of the smartest men in New York, we'd have made a mess of it."

"Oh! You mean Judge Everett?"

"No, I don't mean Judge Everett. He's got plenty of other things to do. I mean a business man."

Matthew leaned forward and regarded the boy with a puzzled look. "Will you explain?" he finally asked.

Billy unfolded a morning paper and laid it on the table.

"Take this matter of the coal strike," he said, pointing to the heading. "You know what trouble they're trying to make?"

"Yes; they want more pay. Don't you think they should have it?"

"Not if it's going to make the price of coal so high poor folks will freeze. They ought to do as they'd be done by."

"I consider that good advice, William. We are slowly

making them realize that."

"But you don't think for a minute that I figured it out, do you? You don't think I was able to show them where they'd lose in the long run?"

"Why, I-I didn't think much about that. It seemed

the right way to talk to them."

"And then this matter of the Mahoning Steel Company.
You can see—"

"Yes, I can see I was wrong in that. I'm glad you pointed out to me that the other stockholders ought to be consulted. I can see that, just as I can see the wisdom of making our workingmen in various plants participators in the earnings. That was a great idea of yours, William. I certainly—"

"Oh, pshaw!" interrupted Billy. "I can't stand all this praise, when it wasn't my idea at all."

"Not your idea, William! Then whose was it?"

"It was Mr. Durham's, that's whose it was, Mr. Brent! I've just got to tell you! I can't go on this way any longer!"

"Durham!" exclaimed Matthew, laying his hand on

the young man's knee.

"Yes, Durham! He's just kept right on helping, as he said he would, and saving you from a lot of crooks who were a lot worse than the man who knew Greeley."

"But why should Durham do this, William?"

"Because he's a good man, Mr. Brent. If you'd go down and talk things over with him, you'd save yourself a lot of worry. Yes, and you'd—"

"S-s-sh!" interrupted Matthew. "Here comes Mary," and the two of them busied themselves with the portfolio.

"What are you whispering about?" asked Mary as she

approached the table.

"Whispering?" said Billy rising, as though in great surprise. "We weren't whispering. I was just telling Mr. Brent where he could build a big library and give away another million dollars. But that's going to be a secret, isn't it, Mr. Brent?"

"Yes, yes! It's to be a secret for the present."

"Oh, very well," was Mary's rather listless reply as she walked across the room and gazed dreamily across the river. "I don't think I am very greatly interested in affairs today, anyway."

"You might be if you knew what this is," replied

Matthew drily.

Mary shook her head. "The only thing I am interested in is settling the estate and getting back to Tonga just as soon as possible." Then turning suddenly: "How soon do you think that can be?"

Her unexpected question was just a bit startling and Matthew was unprepared to answer.

"What do you think, William?" he asked.

"Well," replied Billy slowly, as though burdened with a great responsibility, "almost any time now."

"Yes," was Matthew's affirmation. "Almost any time

now."

Mary gave a searching glance at the two, as though she

thought they had suddenly lost their minds.

"Do you know what you are talking about?" she asked, with some asperity. "Almost any time," repeating their words. "Why, you know that is impossible. It looks to me as though there were no end to this," and the girl turned again to the window and leaned her forehead against the glass.

"Of course I don't mean right this minute," declared

Billy. "I mean after this-this-"

"This secret," said Matthew, helping the boy out. "After this secret has developed."

Mary laughed dryly. "It must be a wonderful secret."

"Indeed, it is," replied Matthew with much more earnestness. "It is really a most important matter. It may help in solving the whole problem. Did you say Prichard knew about it, William?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then I believe I'll go down to the office and talk it over with him."

"Why, Daddy!" and Mary turned from the window in genuine surprise, "You told me you never wanted to see

the office again."

"Yes, I believe I did; but I've changed my mind. Tell Tippo-Tib to come and get me ready, and William, you order the automobile. I'll be ready in five minutes," and he arose from his chair and crossed the room with a more sprightly step than he had taken for weeks.

All hastened to obey his instructions, and five minutes later he left the house, followed to the automobile by Billy

and Tippo-Tib.

"Good-bye, Mary," he called back to the girl on the door-step as he was entering the machine, "as Horace Greeley used to say—" but the machine bore him away before Mary could hear the rest of his speech.

Slowly Mary re-entered the door and the office, so

recently vacated, her mind filled with many things.

"I don't understand it," she mused, "but anyway the drive will do him good." Then as she noted the papers lying on the table; "they didn't attend to much business this morning. I wonder if they really are trying to keep something from me? Why Daddy was actually laughing, as they rode away. I wish I could laugh!" and she threw herself into Matthew's big chair. "Why did I ever leave Tonga? Oh, Arthur! Arthur! How could you deceive me so?" and she buried her face in her hands and wept.

"Who has deceived Missy?" asked a sweet voice at

her side. "Not Mr. Billy?"

Mary raised her eyes suddenly.

"Oh, Ila-Ila, how you startled me! I didn't hear you come in."

"Who has deceived Missy?" insisted the little maid.

"Mr. Durham, Ila-Ila; but you wouldn't understand."

"Missy hasn't seen Mr. Durham for a long time. How could he deceive her?"

"This was a long time ago."

"The bad man!" was Ila-Ila's sympathetic comment. "What did he do?"

"What did he do?" and Mary wrinkled her brows. "Why, he—he—didn't tell me he was—that he did—well, that he went to places he couldn't take me."

"Maybe he didn't go. Did Missy ask him?"

"Of course not!"

"Why not?"

"How could I? He would think-"

"He wouldn't think any more than he thinks now, would he?"

"I'm sure I don't know," was Mary's hesitating reply. "I wonder what he does think?"

"Why doesn't Missy ask him? I would."

"What?" and Mary sprang from the chair and seized Ila-Ila by the shoulders. "You would ask him? If it were Billy, and he had done something you didn't know about, would you ask him?"

"Yes; and Mr. Billy would tell me. I know he would." The simplicity and faith expressed in the maid's answer moved Mary to action as nothing else could have done.

"Of course he would, Ila-Ila; and I know Arthur will tell me. He said he would come whenever I sent for him.

I'll send now. Go call a messenger."

Ila-Ila hastened to obey while Mary turned to the table. Taking a pen from the rack, she cast her eye about for a sheet of paper. The first piece she picked up was the memorandum from which Billy had been reading and which, in his haste, he had forgotten. The handwriting attracted her attention and she gave a sudden start.

"What is this?" she exclaimed as her eyes ran over the written words. "Advise no compromise with miners. Suggest increase for spinners in Squantuck mills. Refuse N. Y. P. & K. extension. Investigate Madison library

needs. Explain Blackford matter. Durham."

"So!" exultantly, "this is where we have all been getting the wisdom to manage the estate. No wonder Mr. Gage was surprised at our improved understanding of conditions. Oh, Daddy, Daddy, what a lot of fools we all have been!"

She re-read the memorandum, and as she did so Durham's course became even more clear, until she cried out for very joy: "Yes! Yes! And he has done it all because he loves me!"

She pressed the paper to her lips and kissed the name. The simple contact with the signature seemed to open her eyes, and she sprang to her feet.

"This is the great secret!" she said aloud. "Daddy has just found out and he has gone to the office. Oh, I

can't wait. I'll go too!"

Five minutes later she and Ila-Ila were speeding down town in the wake of the others.

CHAPTER XXVII

PRICHARD had just come down from his morning conference with Durham and Judge Everett, when Billy burst into his private office with the information that Matthew was in his office and wanted to see him at once.

"What's that?" asked the aged clerk rising to his feet with all the alacrity his rheumatism would permit. "Matthew here?"

"Sure thing, Prichard! I've gone and let the cat out of the bag!"

"What? You told him how things are being managed?"

"Not entirely; but enough so he knows that Mr. Dur-ham—"

"How'd he take it?" asked Prichard nervously, inter-

rupting the youth in his explanation.

"Tickled to death. Tired of the whole thing. He's come down to talk it all over with you and Mr. Durham."

"Good! Good!" and Prichard rubbed his hands together gleefuly. Then suddenly: "How'd Miss Brent take it?"

Billy changed color and his confident manner left him.

"Why—why, we haven't told her."

"Then the sooner Mr. Durham knows conditions, the better," said Prichard. "You go up and tell him, while I go in and talk with Matthew."

Billy darted away on his mission and a minute later Prichard, with his hands full of papers, entered Matthew's office, where the books were piled up just as on the day he left.

"Well, well, Matthew," was his greeting, "I am surely glad you have come down. We have been wanting to have a conference with you for some days. You know—"

"Yes, I know," was Matthew's quizzical interruption, "and I ought to be angry; but somehow or other I'm not. Do you know, Prichard, I feel ten years younger since I have learned that a young man is at the helm. Yes, and I guess I look it, don't I, Tippo-Tib?" turning to the islander behind his chair.

"The good father has heard good news," was the characteristic reply. "It is good medicine."

"That's right, Matthew. Good news is almost as good

medicine as old Dr. Mandrakes'-"

Matthew held up his hand with a warning gesture.

"There, there, Prichard," he laughed. "You needn't go to recommending any patent medicines."

"Oh, I wasn't going to recommend you to take any-

thing. I was just going to tell you-"

His words were interrupted by the sudden entrance of Gilson Gage, who burst into the office as he had on several other occasions, when he and Morris were trying to 'put one over' and had run afoul of a snag.

"So, here you are?" was his greeting as he stopped in front of the desk at which Matthew was seated. "I suspected as much when I telephoned your house and was

told you had gone down town."

His face was black as he spoke and there was that about his words, which Matthew resented, although at the moment he could not have told why.

"Oh, you telephoned to the house," and Matthew's query contained in it the suggestion of surprise. "Anything special?"

"Special! Special! Well I should think so, although it

may look quite regular to you. What do you mean by countermanding the order to the trust company. to deliver to me the Squantuck Mills stock for Mrs. Blackford?"

"Countermand the order? What do you mean? The only order I have countermanded was about closing

down the Mahoning mills."

"Yes; I've heard about that too, and I'll talk with you about that later. Now I want to know why the trust company has been instructed not to pay over that million in securities, after I have gone to all the trouble to get the widow to sign off—"

His speech was interrupted by the entrance of Durham

and Billy.

"Why, good morning, Mr. Brent," exclaimed Durham as he advanced and grasped the hand that Matthew extended. "We are certainly glad to see you!" Then as though seeing Gage for the first time: "Oh, hello Gage, what are you doing here?"

"None of your business."

"Oh, is that so? Well, now, perhaps you are mistaken. What does he want, Mr. Brent?"

"He wants to know why the trust company won't deliver the million dollars' worth of stock of the Squantuck Mills, for which I gave him an order, to settle the Blackford claim. You know about the Blackford claim, don't you, Arthur?"

"Oh, yes, I know all about it," and the emphasis he put upon the 'all' caused both Matthew and Gage to regard

him intently.

"Then, perhaps, you can tell," sneered Gage, "why Mr.

Brent's order for delivery has not been recognized?"

"Certainly I can. By order of the court it takes two signatures for such a transfer—Mr. Brent's and mine. I have refused to sign the order; that's all."

"What?"

It was Matthew who spoke as he arose quickly from his

chair and confronted Durham with an angry look.

"Do you mean to tell me," he continued, when Durham made no reply, "that you refuse to let my orders in the Blackford case stand?"

"That is exactly what I mean, Mr. Brent," was Durham's positive and direct reply. "I shall be very glad to explain—"

"I want no explanation!" declared Matthew with a sudden display of anger, breaking in upon Durham's

speech. "I can see-"

A startled exclamation interrupted Matthew.

It came from Mary, who had quietly entered the room

while the others were speaking.

"Oh, Daddy," she cried as she came swiftly forward from the doorway in which she had halted, "let him explain. I am sure he—"

Before she could finish there came a third in the series of interruptions. An inner door literally burst open and Morris rushed in with flaming eyes, his usually pallid face almost purple with anger, and with the manner of a madman.

"So!" he shouted as he caught sight of Gage, "this is where you have hid yourself, you—you—two-faced crook!" and he seized his erstwhile confederate by the throat with a strength born of uncontrolled anger. "You're trying to double cross me, are you? I'll show you!"

"What do you mean?" cried Gage, as with a fearful effort at self-preservation, he tore himself free from Morris's grasp and, with clenched fists, placed himself

upon the defensive. "Are you crazy?"

"No, I'm not crazy, and you know what I mean. You told me that you could induce that imbecile there to pay

Mrs. Blackford only \$200,000 and he has given you an order for a million! A million, do you hear, and you are trying to beat me out of it! I should kill you!"

Had a shell from a Big Bertha struck the building, it could have caused no more surprise and astonishment to

the others in the room, than Morris's accusation.

They were for the moment stricken speechless and motionless.

But it was only for a moment, for the next instant Morris whipped a weapon from his pocket, with what intent no one could doubt.

Aroused to action by the danger which threatened, both Durham and Gage launched themselves directly at the infuriated man—the former taking the risk of meeting the same fate that Morris intended for the latter.

"Arthur!" came one wailing cry from Mary, as she realized the danger of her lover; but ere another word could be uttered, interference that prevented a tragedy

came from an unexpected quarter.

In the scuffle between Morris and Gage, the former had landed close to Matthew. Now, as the enraged would-be slayer drew his weapon and swung his arm to aim it at his victim, Matthew's fist launched out with a vigor that demonstrated that a few weeks of worry could not entirely destroy what had been built up with years of out-door life.

The blow struck Morris squarely on the side of the head and he went to the floor in a heap, his revolver flying to the other side of the room. With a single bound, Tippo-

Tib was upon him and had him securely pinioned.

By the time Morris realized what had happened, he found himself seated in a chair, with Tippo-Tib standing guard over him with his own weapon and with a look upon his face that indicated he was there to obey any order Matthew might give, just as he had done for years in the Island of Tonga.

"And now," said Matthew, who had stood apparently unmoved while the result of his blow was being decided, "let us hear, Mr. Gage, what you have to say to this accusation."

"Yes, Mr. Gage," echoed Mary, who now stood with her hand on Matthew's arm and regarded the two schemers with a courage greater than she had felt for weeks, "what have you to say?"

Gage made no reply and for a long moment there was

silence, until Morris burst out:

"He has nothing to say! I have spoken the truth, and he knows it. I was to give him a chance to win the girl and he was to give me whatever could be obtained for the Blackford claim."

"And which," continued Durham, "you had bought from Mrs. Blackford for \$25,000." Then to Matthew; "It was this release, Mr. Brent, signed by Mrs. Blackford, which Gage presented to the trust company, together with your order for a million dollars in stock. Now that you know the truth, I will ask you if you wish me to countersign your order and let Gage have the securities?"

"Certainly not; but I would like for the widow Black-

ford to have what I consider her due."

"Mrs. Blackford has had more than her due. Had it not been that some one has stolen the files from your brother's office, we should have been able to prove this to you days ago. As it is, it has only been within the past forty-eight hours that the real facts have come to light. An examination of the books of the Bridgeport National Bank, shows that the loan of \$100,000 made to the Squantuck Mills yes that the loan of form, and was not to be filed within a stolen the. Had not Mr. Blackford been stricken down suddenly, he would doubtless have returned the paper to Simon Brent, who was the president

of the company. He may even have been on his way to do this when he was taken ill; which would account for the

paper being in his pocket.

"I also think it but justice to your brother to say that the sums he had given Mrs. Blackford at various times amount to nearly fifty thousand dollars. She never would have made this claim, she tells me, had she not been urged to it by Morris, who told her she might as well have it as any one else, as long as you were giving it away."

"Do you mean," asked Matthew slowly, "that Simon

actually gave away to one family \$50,000?"

"He certainly did, Matthew."

It was Prichard who answered, and as Matthew turned upon him an enquiring look he continued: "Yes, and he gave away plenty of money to others who were entitled to it."

"There! Daddy!" cried Mary, "I knew Uncle Simon had a good heart and that he never defrauded anyone. Oh, how we have wronged him!" and she bowed her head upon her grandfather's shoulder.

For a long minute there was silence, as Matthew stood patting the girl on the shoulder as he had so often done

when, as a child, she had come to him for comfort.

"I want to refrain from doing anyone an injustice," he at length said, "but I shall never interfere with justice being meted out to any man. I am sure it is only just that Mr. Morris should lose the \$25,000 he paid Mrs. Blackford—unless his good friend and great financier, Mr. Gage, desires to make it up to him," and Matthew cast a withering glance toward that crafty gentleman, who stood apart with downcast eyes and clenched hands.

"A thing he might easily do," suggested Durham, "out

of what he cleaned up on Mahoning Steel stock."

"On Mahoning Steel stock?" queried Matthew, turning upon Durham a puzzled glance. "How was that?"

"Why," was the explanation, "Mr. Gage's disinterested advice that you close down the Mahoning plant, sent the stock down so fast that he must have been able to buy quite a bit of it very cheaply. The order to continue operations sent the price up again, so I suppose he may have cleaned up a million, or more."

"So!" and Matthew slowly nodded his head, while the attitude of weariness, temporarily laid aside, again appeared. "From the very beginning, it seems, I have been

surrounded by crooks and liars."

"I object!" cried Gage and Morris in one breath. "I am not!"

The former advanced with a threatening gesture, while the latter attempted to rise from his chair, but was pre-

vented by Tippo-Tib.

"Listen—the both of you!" said Durham sternly, drawing closer to Matthew. "When you leave this office, it will be forever. It is not enough that you are responsible for the death of Simon Brent, but—"

"It's a lie!" shouted Morris. "I defy you to prove it!"

"I don't need to prove it; but you know it was anger and the shock therefrom, at discovering your treachery in playing into the hands of Gilson Gage, that brought on the stroke that ended Simon Brent's life."

"Of course he does," affirmed Billy, who had remained in the background with Ila-Ila, an intensely interested auditor of all that was being said, "and so do I. Miss Mary sent me back to ask her uncle a question and I heard and saw it all."

For an instant Matthew drew himself to his full height and slowly raised his hand. Then, before anyone could divine what his intent might have been, he sank down into his chair.

"Not only thieves and swindlers, but murderers!" he muttered. "And all for what? Money and more money!

Why was I ever induced to return to a place where I

haven't a single friend!"

"Why, Daddy," cried Mary in real distress, as she leaned over and tenderly stroked his hair, "how can you say such a thing. Can't you see that Arthur has been your real friend from the beginning!"

Then as she turned impulsively to the young man: "Oh, "Arthur, can you ever forgive me for listening to the

others and doubting you?"

With one swift movement Durham gathered her in his arms.

"For doubting me, yes; but not for doubting my love!"

was his whispered reply.

Mary's sudden transition from grief to joy, seemed to change the entire atmosphere of the room, arousing even Matthew and the aged Prichard from the depths of sorrow and resentment, to a contemplation of the possibilities of the future. This changed condition was further accentuated when Mary, in the exuberance of her joy, threw her arms about Matthew's neck and exclaimed with the deepest conviction of its truth:

"Daddy! Daddy! This will make everything all right. Arthur can manage the estate and you can go back to

Tonga whenever you wish!"

Slowly Matthew raised his head and regarded the lovers

quizzically.

"Tonga!" he finally said, while just the shadow of a smile flitted across his face. "Tonga! Yes, Mary, I expect that is where I had better go; but I guess it would seem pretty tame after all this." Then, turning to Billy: "What would you advise, William?"

Billy's face grew red, as he replied slowly: "I'll tell you my advice, Mr. Brent—and this is first hand: If you think, as I've often heard you say, that living is doing something for somebody, it looks to me as though you

could do more in that line on Manhattan Island than on any other island in the world."

"I consider that good advice," said Durham. "We

think so, too; don't we Mary?"

"Indeed we do, Daddy. The estate isn't divided yet."

"No," admitted Matthew, "but it will be—and well divided I am sure. Where there's a will to do right, there is always a way—even though an old fossil like me couldn't discover it. Tame as it may seem, Tonga is about my size."

"O, pshaw!" exclaimed Billy in a tone of disgust "What makes you say that. They don't make 'em bigger

than you are."

"That's expert opinion," said Durham.

"And you'd better remain and prove it," added Mary. During all this conversation the others had stood silent but attentive listeners. When Matthew did not at once reply, Tippo-Tib, seemingly forgetful of Morris, came hastily forward, and kneeling at Matthew's side, asked tremulously:

"What says the good father?"

"Well," and Matthew looked up into the faces of Mary and Durham, "now that I see it is possible to be happy

anywhere, New York looks pretty good to me.

"Yes, Tippo-Tib," and he laid his hand caressingly on the islander's head, "the broader the sphere of activity, the greater good one should be able to do. I begin to understand, however, that in order to accomplish the greatest good, the man entrusted with the work must be as broad as the sphere of his activity. Before I leave New York I want to become that broad."

His gaze turned upon Morris and Gage, neither of whom had moved, although free to have done so. For an instant he hesitated; then in a voice resonant with emotion, and indicative of a memorable victory, he said:

"In this broadening process, gentlemen, I think I shall begin with you. What has occurred in this office shall go no further, and you are both at liberty to pursue your way, unhampered by any publicity on my part. I trust, however, that our paths may hereafter lay apart, although I shall remain in New York—at least until after the wedding. How does that suit you, Tippo-Tib?"

Before the eyes of Tippo-Tib there arose a vision of blue waters, lapping white sands; of blue skies, gleaming through tall palms. To his ears came the song of tropical birds, while the fragrance of English roses, nurtured by gracious sunshine seemed borne on the breezes from the southern seas. For an instant the vision stayed his speech; then, in a voice thrilling with faith and love, he replied trustfully:

"The good father knows best."

THE END

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